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THE IMPACT OF ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOURS OF A SAUDI PRIVATE WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY ON STUDENTS' LEARNING EXPERIENCES DURING THEIR COLLEGE YEARS

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THE IMPACT OF ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOURS OF A SAUDI PRIVATE
WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY ON STUDENTS' LEARNING EXPERIENCES
DURING THEIR COLLEGE YEARS

Dissertation
by

FAHDAH ALTHONAYAN

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of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

The Impact of Organisational Behaviours of a Saudi Private Women's University on
Students' Learning Experiences During Their College Years

by

Fahdah Althonayan

Professor Paul Blackmore, Dissertation Chair

There is little research that addresses how the organisational behaviour of universities in Saudi Arabia influences students' experiences. Additionally, research is scant regarding the impact of university behaviours in Saudi Arabia as it relates to gender, particularly female students. This qualitative case study addresses these gaps in the literature by examining how and in what ways college organisational culture (behaviour) influences students' learning experiences through their college years in a new, private women's university in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Semi-structured interviews with campus administrators, faculty members and students were conducted and triangulated with data obtained from campus observations and document analysis. Specific attention was given to students' perceptions of their academic, social and functional experiences during their college experiences.

Data showed that the university reflected more than one organisational structure, which explained many aspects of the university's administrative style. In general, students and staff seemed to be influenced by the university's organisational structure and administrative style, as well as other aspects of the university's culture, which all played important roles in shaping students' and staff members' experiences within the college.

Findings from this study suggest a positive correlation between collegiality and student involvement. Bureaucratic features as well as political features of the university's organisational structure seemed to have a mixed relationship with perceptions of research participants. Symbolic features that emphasised shared values, rituals and harmony all seemed to have a clear, positive correlation with students' and staff members' experiences.

The scarcity of new publications that investigate the influence of higher educational institutions' organisational behaviours on students, both in general and specifically in Saudi Arabia, highlight a need for further examination of this topic using different methodological approaches. Studying this subject will not only benefit institutions by identifying their strengths and weaknesses, but will also help optimise universities' efforts to improve the quality of education offered to students. Additionally, more research in this area would benefit students by identifying their needs and perceptions about their academic, social, functional and overall college experiences.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

During recent years, Saudi Arabia has witnessed noticeable changes in educational, economic, political and social fields. One sector that the Saudi government is paying great attention to and targeting for reform and improvement is education including a specific focus on higher education. The government strongly believes that improvements in Saudi society resulting from investments in education will contribute positively to the economy. The focus of the government is the development of the education system. Therefore, the government is increasing its financial and political support to the education sector and higher education in particular (Rasooldeen, 2011).

As a result of His Royal Majesty's support and encouragement of higher education, Saudi society witnessed many educational changes that seek the development and improvement of the educational and higher education systems. Since 2004, Saudi universities have increased from 8 public universities to 21 universities (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Higher Education, 2010). Most of these new universities were pre-established colleges that were converted into universities. Moreover, a large number of vocational institutions and a growing number of private colleges have recently been established, such as the Arabic Open University and Prince Sultan University. Also, the opening of King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), which is supervised and supported by some of the leading universities around the world such as Oxford and Cambridge,

has had a positive impact on Saudi society and aims to be the biggest and the leading research and technological university in the Middle East (Corbyn, 2009). KAUST received a grant approximating 10 billion US dollars from King Abdullah which provides evidence of the government's commitment to developing and improving the country's higher education system (Corbyn, 2009).

Like many other countries around the world, the Saudi government faces many political, economic and social challenges. These challenges, rising from events such as the terrorist attacks of September 11, the collapse of the world economy and membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO), have placed the Saudi Kingdom in a position where it should respond to political, economic and social challenges. Population growth, with 60% of Saudi society under the age of 30, places significant demands on the government to offer essential life facilities such as education, health, security and stability (Grigorenko, 2007). Being a member of the WTO and entering the age of economic globalisation require Saudi Arabia to face many issues such as revisiting the economy to reduce its dependence on oil as the only source of national income, strengthening the labour force, supporting industrial cities, improving the quality of factories and production and developing an open trade market. To address these goals, the government has adopted policies that are intended to support the development of economic-based knowledge and vocational training that is directly beneficial to the economy as catalysts for progress in improving the quality of the labour force so it meets market demands. These challenges surface in higher education, placing responsibility on this sector to train, educate and prepare students for future employment which will benefit Saudi society and the economy. Minister of Higher Education Dr. Al-Angari acknowledges the fact that higher education needs to

provide more technological empowerment, research production, vocational training and better connections to labour market demands and needs of the economy (Donn & Al Manthri, 2010).

Also, owing to population increases and the number of youth as one of the country's largest social challenges, colleges and universities find themselves with significant numbers of high school graduates applying for higher education and limited numbers of openings (Altbach, 2011a). Rising demands on higher education in Saudi society are associated with a belief among Saudis that higher education will yield better employment opportunities and will reflect positively on social, educational and economic levels. As a result, the higher education system assumes responsibility to prepare citizens for future career opportunities. This is in conflict with limited openings in colleges and universities and the lack of coordination between higher education institutions and public and private organisations seeking qualified employees (Mosa, 2000).

While quality education has the potential to combat societal challenges, the Saudi educational sector has been largely criticised as lacking economic knowledge, of being unaware of labour and market needs, of providing poor connections between corporate and public organisations and of being unable to accommodate the demand of students seeking higher education. These inherent weaknesses have been connected to many social issues such as the high unemployment rate, poor economic growth, difficulties in diversifying the national income (e.g., removing dependence on oil as the primary source of income), poverty, population increases and equitable access to higher education (World Bank, 2007).

Specific also to Saudi society are cultural values and beliefs emphasising gender segregation, thus limiting career options and professional opportunities for women (Donn & Al Manthri, 2010; Onsman, 2011). The official educational policy in Saudi Arabia emphasises the idea of gender segregation and implements this by having dual educational systems, one for males and the other for females. It has been claimed that men and women have equal opportunities when it comes to accessing higher education, but in reality, it is quite the opposite. Women in Saudi Arabia are not allowed to study engineering, the marine and military, petroleum and media (El-Sanbary, 1994). Also, professional opportunities are limited for women to the fields of academics, banking and humanities (e.g., doctoring and nursing). Moreover, the most prestigious jobs are mainly restricted to men (Mazawi, 1999). Ironically and in spite of the above limitations and challenges facing women in Saudi Arabia when it comes to their education and career options, Saudi women constitute 60% of the total higher education enrolment rate (Altbach, 2011b). With women constituting the majority of students attending institutions of higher education, a challenge facing Saudi society is how to address their limited career and job opportunities, as they are considered to be an underutilised labour force.

According to a report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2008), challenges facing the Saudi higher education system can be summarised by the following points:

1. The quality of graduate students should meet international standards and answer enterprise demands (e.g., improving students' research skills and providing vocational, technical and information technology training).

2. Knowledge production should be economically oriented in order to meet the needs of corporation productions.
3. Universities should strive to be top-rated in international rankings.
4. Universities should address internal challenges such as the market labour demand, the quality and quantity of higher education outcomes, increased access demands on higher education, access and equity of higher education and aspects relating to evaluation and performance. Universities should be adequately funded and developed into high tech institutions and research centres.

The Saudi government recognises challenges facing the higher education system and has started to make changes in an attempt to reform the system. Consequently, the current Saudi government has introduced policies supporting efforts to improve the level of higher education so that it meets international standards. The government approved the establishment of private universities for the first time in 1997 (Al Dali, 2010). Some individuals (Coffman, 2003; Donn & Al Manthri, 2010) have suggested that privatisation is the answer to some of the challenges facing the Saudi higher education system. Private universities, they claim, would provide increased access to students wanting to enrol in higher education, thus addressing the problem of limited space in public universities. This, in turn, would lower the demand for access to public institutions as well as provide eventual financial relief for the government (Donn & Al Manthri, 2010). Also, it has been claimed that private universities might ensure a high quality of teaching and learning resulting in highly skilled, well-trained students who could contribute positively to society (Coffman, 2003).

With the help of the enormous revenue from oil, the government also initiated several scholarship programmes – for example, King Abdullah scholarship programmes (Al Dali, 2010) – to send numerous Saudi students to study abroad in many different countries. The King scholarship programme aims to enrich students' knowledge and to develop the quality of Saudi human resources. The government expects such policies to improve the higher education experience in Saudi Arabia. Also, Saudi higher education has witnessed a significant expansion with a large budget that has been spent in support of the new universities and research centres around the Kingdom. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the opening of KAUST placed expectations on developing and improving the higher education system (King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, 2015; Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Higher Education, 2010).

One of these initiatives includes the policy of allowing the establishment of private universities. The Saudi government has sent students to study overseas for many years owing to a lack of higher education resources within the country. Encouraging the private sector to take an active role in higher education signals changes in the government's attitude toward higher education as a step to facilitate and improve the higher education system. Since the opening of the first university in the 1950s, the public higher education system has been controlled by the central government (Prokop, 2003). Having the private sector assume some of the control over higher education might be an indication of a more democratic approach to sharing power and may be a reflection of some of the political reforms the government has been addressing. A possible explanation for the increase in private higher education institutions is that the government now believes that the private

sector (not necessarily for profit) can contribute positively to the development of the country's education system by providing more educational opportunities for an increasing number of high school graduates, thus fulfilling the needs of the labour market as well as matching scientific and technical development in the world (Al Dali, 2010).

The government gave the private sector approval to open new private universities and supports these universities financially and administratively (Al Dali, 2010). Although the new universities reflect the values of the Islamic and Saudi cultures, at the same time they incorporate elements of higher education systems in western countries. For example, the University of Arizona (United States) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) helped during the establishment stage of Prince Sultan University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Additionally, the Steven Institute of Technology in New Jersey (United States) is cooperating in the establishment of the Dar-Al-Faisal University with financial investment from the Boeing Company and the French defence firm, Thales (Altbach & Knight, 2006).

Studying and understanding these new universities and their impact on students directly and on society indirectly need to be informed by research found in higher education literature. American research, which was conducted by Tinto (1994), Astin (1993b) and Berger and Milem (2000), claimed that a college and its organisational behaviours have a noticeable impact on students. Because of the relative newness of Saudi private universities, such findings have yet to be made in these organisations. As has been mentioned, university experience shapes student outcomes (Astin, 1993b). It has been claimed that colleges and universities not only

influence their students, but also impact society. According to Bowen (1997), universities and other institutions of higher education affect society through their guidance of students in becoming active and contributing members of society. Universities provide students with opportunities to develop self-expression, personal skills and self-esteem. Such attributes increase students' capacities for creativity, interpretation, self-profession and self-projection (Barnett & Napoli, 2008).

According to Light (2001), students benefit from college experiences on both academic and social levels, thus leading to increased self-confidence and success. In order to experience success in university life, students need to be well-advised, mentored and guided through their college years. In addition to receiving mentoring and guidance, students' perspectives should be heard with a collaborative approach being implemented in relation to students' programmes of study (Light, 2001).

Generally speaking, it has been claimed that education improves the quality of individuals' lives, develops personalities, increases self-confidence and provides self-fulfilment (Barnett, 2000). Barnett (2000) argues that educated people civilise their societies by liberalising their economy, creating new job opportunities and implementing knowledge gained from studies and research in their practical lives. Therefore, higher education is a catalyst for bettering the lives of individuals and societies (Barnett, 2000). It also has been claimed that the growth of knowledge leads to the development of social and global wisdom. Such development in knowledge and science contributes positively to solving society's problems such as poverty, unemployment, homelessness, healthcare and education (Barnett & Maxwell, 2008). Light's (2001) research also suggested that educating people improves the overall quality of life in society, adding that a university has the potential to contribute to

societal advancement through new knowledge and science discoveries. Such contributions lead to improved world rankings and attract greater numbers of students. It has also been suggested that quality education and training play important roles in expanding and diversifying national economic success by preparing and providing students with the skills and knowledge that respond to market demands and requirements of future employers (Donn & Al Manthri, 2010).

Research on the role and impact of higher education (Barnett, 2000; Barnett & Maxwell, 2008; Donn & Al Manthri, 2010; Light, 2001), therefore, suggests that when well-educated students are received into society, their presence modifies the general social environment with their activities contributing to the development of society. It can be argued that these changes to society reflect, in part, the experiences and training associated with higher education. Therefore, it seems that colleges and universities play an important role in developing societies and people through the impact they have on students and on generating new knowledge.

Therefore, studying the impact of a Saudi private university on students' learning experiences is worthwhile and will make an original contribution to knowledge, helping the Saudis to understand the nature of the new private universities and the influence they have on students. More importantly, this study will help policymakers, government officials and educators understand and identify the strengths and weaknesses within the private university system and may consequently lead to improvements in the system for the benefit of students and society.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand the nature, structure and organisational behaviour of a private university in Saudi Arabia with specific consideration being given to how and in what ways organisational behaviours influence students' learning experiences and satisfaction with their college experiences. The previous section highlighted the importance of education in general and higher education in particular to societal development and economic growth. Research indicates a relationship between the organisational structure of higher education institutions and students' learning experiences and outcomes (Astin, 1993b; Barnett & Napoli, 2008; Berger, 2002a, 2002b; Berger & Milem, 2000; Tinto, 1994). For example, students' satisfaction and reflections related to their learning experiences during their college years are considered to be indicators of institutional success, thus strengthening a university's reputation (Berger, 2002b). Student satisfaction reflects the level of students' happiness and success through their university years. It has been claimed that successful student achievement is directly connected to appropriate advising and mentoring, collaboration in decision-making processes and involvement in campus and educational activities (Light, 2001). It has also been suggested that students' satisfaction with their college experiences not only benefits the students themselves, but also creates a positive reputation for universities (Lomas, 2007).

A more detailed discussion of this topic investigating the relationship between universities' organisational structures and behaviours and students' learning experiences, satisfaction and outcomes is discussed in chapter 4 which covers a review of relevant literature. The influence of higher education institutions and their organisational behaviours and structures on students and their learning experiences

has not been examined in Saudi settings. This translates into a lack of official publications and research considering this topic. Therefore, this thesis is significant in its contribution to this research gap and will hopefully encourage further investigation of this significant topic.

Private universities in Saudi Arabia are supervised by the Ministry of Higher Education (Al Dali, 2010) and, therefore, follow the main mission and policies established by the ministry for public universities. This includes the practice of Islamic values and beliefs, the provision of equal educational opportunities for all citizens, the meeting of international higher education standards and the preparation of citizens to serve their country (Saleh, 1986).

At the same time, private universities differentiate themselves by their functionality and the services they provide. They have freedom to choose their students, seek their own financial support, design their buildings, recruit their staff and oversee all academic work (e.g., curriculum design, selection of text books and the development of degree requirements). However, in spite of this relative freedom, there are general regulations, missions and values outlined by the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education which the new private universities must follow. In addition, private universities are evaluated academically and administratively by the Ministry of Higher Education to ensure quality in the processes of teaching and learning (Al Dali, 2010).

Studying these private universities is important because they are young, fast-growing institutions aiming to be the colleges of the future that attract top students and prepare them to be future leaders. For example, the mission statement of Effat University, a private university located in Jeddah, emphasises the idea of being one of

the leading private higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia intending to educate tomorrow's leaders to an international standard (Effat University, 2010). Understanding the way private universities influence their students is beneficial because knowing how to impact students positively and increase their satisfaction may facilitate reforms and improvements in higher education structures, systems and regulations. Therefore, reforms should ultimately focus on improving students' learning outcomes. Kuh et al. (2005) claimed that this can be accomplished through means such as active learning which engages students in classroom activities, peer tutoring and encouraging students to undertake internships and attend conferences. It is suggested that learning of this type develops students' leadership and social skills (Kuh et al., 2005).

Saudi private universities have clear goals of improving the quality of higher education in the country, attracting talented students, meeting higher educational international standards and distinguishing themselves from public universities in order to compete with other institutions of higher education and to attract more students. They also have much more flexibility in structuring their internal governing rules. Therefore, they have a different organisational structure from public universities which has been put in place to help them achieve their goals. These structures have greater flexibility, and their organisational culture is said to be more collegial than their public sector counterparts (Prince Sultan University, 2007). Such organisational behaviours have never been studied before nor has the way they affect students, which is still unknown. For this reason, a private university was chosen as the research site for this study with the intent of examining how organisational behaviours within this university affect its students.

Research Question

This empirical research set out to answer the following research question:

How and in what ways does college organisational behaviour and culture influence students' learning experiences through their college years in a women's Saudi Arabian private university?

Significance of the Study

Studying the impact of organisational behaviours within colleges on students' learning experiences in a Saudi Arabian private university is a subject that needs examination. There are two reasons for this: (1) Private universities in Saudi Arabia are still new and considered to be young institutions and have not been the subject of a significant research study. (2) This study will help to meet the need for research in the field of higher education considering the impact of organisational behaviour on students' learning experiences.

Addressing the research question first requires a close look at the structure of the private university in order to understand the ways in which systems operate and to identify associated organisational behaviours. Secondly, this study highlights the influences of the organisational nature and behaviours of colleges on students' learning experiences. It also provides a deeper understanding for educators of the selected private university's organisational structure. This analysis can contribute to discussions about governmental reforms and highlights strengths and weaknesses of private universities in relation to improving their performance levels and productivity.

The Research Site

To answer the research questions, to connect the findings to relevant literature and prior to data collection and analysis, a description of the research site and a brief background about the university included in this study is provided to situate the research in its social, cultural and organisational contexts. This description of the research site helps provide an understanding about the nature and the culture of the university.

Prince Sultan University for women (PSU) was selected as the research site for this study. The following sections provide detailed descriptions of the university's background, mission, goals, demographics, schools and academic departments.

Background

The university describes its initial beginnings as a collective effort among individuals from different educational and professional backgrounds (Prince Sultan University, 2015b). PSU was established in 1999/2000 as one of the first private, non-profit universities in Saudi Arabia. A large number of Riyadh's businessmen and educators who are members of the business community of Riyadh first developed the idea of founding the university, reportedly as a way to show their appreciation for their city (Prince Sultan University, 2015b). The foundation of the university was aided by their financial donations and educational experience along with support and a substantial donation from His Royal Highness Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz (Prince Sultan University, 2015b). By 2003, the university was licensed by the Ministry of Higher Education and declared as a non-profit private university.

The following section describes the university's mission, values and goals in detail. It also discusses the university's student and faculty populations as well as the various colleges and administration.

University's Mission and Goals

PSU's mission statement claims that their aim is to provide students with "...a quality education to the highest international standards. In its efforts towards a successful and responsible life-long learning, PSU integrates modern technology, pedagogy and human values for the advancement of scientific research, productivity and leadership towards a more meaningful social life" (Prince Sultan University, 2015a).

The university (Prince Sultan University, 2015a) also claims that one of its main objectives is to provide its students with excellent and unique educational experiences that will help them become productive citizens where they can serve the needs of their society and enjoy reliable and satisfactory employment. Additionally, the university asserts that their primary goal is to encourage students to become more involved in practical issues within the community. For example, the university offers a cooperative education programme which encourages students to become productive members of society. The co-op programme allows students to apply classroom knowledge and skills to real-life work experience in some business corporations inside Saudi Arabia and abroad. Therefore, the university suggests that it not only teaches students, but it also encourages and trains students by partnering with large companies and government institutions to provide internships, jobs and other means for students to participate in real-life experiences (Prince Sultan University, 2015a).

The university's official mission statement, visions and goals stress the importance of students' social experiences and community obligations as a critical component of students' educational experiences. This is one of the main issues that was investigated and explored in-depth in this research.

Institutional Size and Demographics

The university did not provide its enrolment statistics, but one of the university's administrators (AD1) reported during the interviews that the women's college had a growing number of students which reached 2,169 female students in 2014. The university is divided into three colleges which feature 10 undergraduate academic programmes and two master's programmes. One way that multiculturalism is manifest at PSU is through the university's enrolment of a diverse student population. Through discussions with research participants, the researcher observed that while the majority of students and staff are Saudis, other countries that are represented within the student body include the Arab Gulf region, Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Tunisia, Spain, Pakistan, Turkey, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States. According to Astin (1993a), this diversity can contribute positively to students' learning experiences by exposing them to other cultures, thus increasing their cultural awareness, personal commitment, political liberalism and satisfaction with their college experiences. Astin also claimed that the positive effects of college diversity not only contributes to student outcomes but also supports the goal of general education.

The researcher also observed through discussions with research participants that faculty members represent various backgrounds and specialisations. The

university has more than 120 faculty members who come from different countries (e.g., United States, United Kingdom, Australia, India, Pakistan, Egypt, Tunisia and other Arab countries) and have earned their degrees from well-known institutions around the world. According to Astin (1993a), such a diverse faculty can add value to the university's academic reputation and exposes students to different teaching methods. Astin also asserted that having faculty members with various backgrounds enriches the diversity of the university's culture by producing a strong and culturally aware environment and increases students' overall satisfaction with their college experiences.

Schools and Academic Departments

The university has two main academic divisions: the women's colleges and the men's colleges. The women's colleges include six major departments: the college of business administration, the computer and information science department, the English department, the college of law, the college of interior design and architecture and the general courses department. All of these departments are administered and run by female professors and administrators.

The college of business administration offers an undergraduate programme with three majors, namely finance, marketing and accounting. In addition to the undergraduate programme, the college recently launched an MBA programme. The computer science department provides bachelor's degrees (BS) in two areas: computer science (CS) and information systems (IS). The English department provides three undergraduate programmes: applied linguistics, translation and

computational linguistics. The college of law, interior design and architecture each offers a single undergraduate programme respectively.

Before specialising in any major, the university requires one year of general academic preparation studies. During this year, students have intensive courses in English, math, Arabic language, computer science and physical education. Successfully passing these courses enables students to continue in their areas of specialty; otherwise, students are required to retake courses until they reach minimum requirements. Not meeting these predetermined requirements necessitates students leaving the university, an action which rarely happens.

Definitions

In order to understand how organisational behaviours of Saudi private universities influence students' learning experiences with their college years, it is necessary to define the following relevant terms:

1. *Organisational culture*. The combination of rituals, values, routines, myths, stories and symbols that reflect and represent the behaviours of groups of people, thus distinguishing them as a body (Dopson & McNay, 2000).
2. *Organisational models or dimensions*. Different categories of organisations that have been classified based on the organisation's behaviours, structures and functionality. Organisational models include the following: the bureaucratic model, the developmental culture, the managerial culture, the collegial model, the political model (or the negotiation culture), the symbolic model and the systematic model (Berger & Milem, 2000; Bergquist, 1992;

Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Morgan, 2006). A detailed description of these models is offered in chapter 4.

3. *College organisational behaviour*. The way an organisation and its agents operate and act. Generally, it describes the daily routines of performance, implementation and decision making within the organisation. Based upon the focus of the organisational behaviour, the major organisational classifications are bureaucratic, political, collegial, symbolic and systematic (Berger & Milem, 2000).
4. *Students' satisfaction*. Student satisfaction can be used as a measurement factor to estimate the happiness students experience and their levels of approval during their college years. Student satisfaction reflects students' attitudes toward the following: relationships with faculty members, university policies and regulations, programmes and curricula, academic advising, university facilities (e.g., library, gym, cafeteria, parking lots) and university services (e.g., health insurance, on-campus work opportunities, housing, financial aid), as well as their personal and social growth (e.g., independence, speech skills, responsibility, decision-making ability, confidence, socialisation and participation in public events) (Astin, 1993b; Berger, 2002a). Mazzarol and Soutar (2001) claimed that education generally and higher education in particular become a service industry or business oriented organisations, and students can be considered the customers of these organisations. Lomas (2007) found two opinions from his research that were frequently expressed by academic staff members. Some felt that student satisfaction is a very important element to a university's success, with others associating student satisfaction

with improved learning and more positive reflections about college experiences. This increased level of satisfaction increases student retention and their rates of degree completion and creates positive public impressions regarding the university (Lomas, 2007).

5. *Islamic administrative model.* This model describes the most common version of the administration system within all Islamic organisations. In his seminal book, *Administrative Development: An Islamic Perspective*, Al-Buraey (1985) described the Islamic administrative model, or the way in which Islamic organisations should behave and operate. Because Saudi Arabia is a Muslim country, Saudi society reflects Muslim values; therefore, these values are reflected in institutions of higher education in Saudi Arabia and are further analysed in the following section as a foundation to understanding the research highlighted in this dissertation.

The following discussion of the Islamic administrative model is drawn from work by Al-Buraey (1985). The extended treatment of this aspect is warranted by the central importance of Islam in Saudi society, and its significance in distinguishing Saudi universities from secular, western universities.

1. *The source of the Islamic Model.* The Islamic administrative and political models come from the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The Qur'an is the Muslim's holy book, and the Sunnah is instructions by the Prophet Mohammed. The Sunnah usually explains in more detail the content of the Qur'an in order to help Muslims understand their duties and rights. Together the Qur'an and the Sunnah are known as the Islamic Shari'ah. The Shari'ah is the source of most of the important principles of the Islamic administrative and political systems.

In general when Muslims face problems that are not mentioned clearly in either the Qur'an or in the Sunnah, they use their understanding of Islam to develop solutions known as fatwas. A fatwa must be associated with principles contained in the Qur'an and Sunnah and cannot be in conflict with those guiding principles.

2. *Shura*. In the Islamic model, Shura refers to the consultation and advisory process that takes place and plays an important role during the decision-making process. Shura represents the voice of the followers and their opinions toward new issues. Shura has been practiced since the early stages of Islam to ensure justice and fairness between people and to prevent the misuse of power and authority. Despite different interpretations and practices associated with the Shura process in various Muslim countries, Shura remains a duty for all Muslims.
3. *Emphasis on Islamic values and ethical standards*. The Islamic model is a value-oriented model seeking the maximisation of Muslim values and ethics through a variety of methods. In order for methods to be successful, they should be flexible and adaptable to changes occurring over a period of time in different societies. Muslims are expected to practice their values and ethics in most, if not all, of their daily life routines.
4. *Punishment of administrative corruption*. Fair dealing is one of the most important Islamic values and morals. Therefore, Islamic regulations are very strict regarding administrative violations or misuse of power. Any administrative corruption such as bribery, prejudice or embezzlement faces serious consequences and punishment.

5. *Balance between material and spiritual well-being.* Islam emphasises the needs of human beings and recognises the materialistic side of human nature. Therefore, Islam encourages people to work and seek perfection in their jobs while also avoiding isolation from the rest of the world. Islam opposes and discourages extremism in any form and asks people to exercise moderation and reasonableness in their religious activities and daily lives. As a way of demonstrating balance between the practical and spiritual sides of their lives, Muslims do business, work and perform their best while at the same time keeping in mind the importance of God and Islamic values.
6. *Social equity, freedom and justice.* The Islamic model emphasises social justice, equity and freedom between people. The Qur'an and Sunnah clearly articulate principles of equity and fairness requiring Muslims to be fair to each other, protect human dignity, care for one another and build positive human brotherhood regardless of individuals' religious beliefs and practices.
7. *Prevention of injustice.* Since fairness and equity are strongly highlighted in Islam, the Islamic model finds ways to protect these principles and to prevent any violation of social justice by implementing the following methods:
 - a. *Education and training for the whole society.* Most violations in Muslim societies come from ignorance and unawareness of the laws and regulations. Therefore, education regarding these guiding principles is essential to every Muslim. Free interaction exists between people and all branches of the government, especially the judicial system. All Muslims should be able to access the courts and deliver their voices or complaints to authorities without fear.

- b. *Awareness and knowledge of people's rights and obligations.* Rights and obligations should be published so that society understands and knows the duties, rights and responsibilities of each member in the system.
- c. *Emphasis on cooperation.* The Qur'an emphasises the importance of a climate of cooperation asking each Muslim to be kind and offer help to others. Collaboration should take place during religious activities and duties. Islamic ethics and morals should be the basis for such collaboration among Muslims.
- d. *Concept of leadership.* The Islamic model has a unique concept of leadership by which it categorises and describes each aspect of leadership and distinguishes it from other secular or religious models. Leaders have no ultimate authority and lead according to specific qualifications such as being loyal to God and demonstrating exceptional mental, physical and spiritual abilities. Leaders should know their duties and responsibilities toward the people and understand that violation or misuses of power will cause them to face serious consequences during life and thereafter as promised by God. Leaders must protect those they lead, supervise them and ensure that fairness and equity are implemented toward them. Upon selection, Islamic leaders should not be discriminated against based upon their colour, race or ethnicity. Instead, selection criteria should be based upon their loyalty to God and their ability to practice and implement Islamic values and ethics. Muslims are expected to follow and support

their leader as long as he is not acting contrary to God's law or other Islamic rules. Obtaining advice from such leaders is required as is mentioned above in the discussion of the concept of Shura.

Methodology

This study utilised a case study approach. This approach is particularly relevant to research questions addressing “how” specific phenomena occur (Yin, 2009). Often, case study methods are used when conducting organisational, political and management studies (Yin, 2009). Case studies are also conducive to the consideration of multiple sources of evidence, allowing the researcher the benefit of looking at the phenomenon from different angles and sources. The case study method seeks to understand the larger phenomenon through close examination of a specific case (Merriam, 1998; Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

This dissertation focused on a case study of a new private, women's university in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The use of a case study method in this study was particularly important in order to address and examine the research question of how this new form of organisation influences student outcomes and learning experiences in Saudi Arabian higher education, also considering students' perceptions of these experiences. It also facilitated an in-depth understanding of the organisational behaviour at the selected research site. Interviews, observations and document analysis were used as methods of data collection. The use of multiple methods for data collection provided triangulation and helped to ensure that the researcher looked at the phenomenon and research context to the fullest extent possible (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). According to

Merriam (1998), the use of triangulation and multiple methods of data collection and analysis strengthen reliability as well as external validity in qualitative studies.

To understand the nature of organisational behaviour within the selected private university and how the system operates, several stages of interviewing and observation were needed. First, administrators in charge of policymaking and decision-making processes and dean for the women's division were interviewed. These interviews provided an understanding of the nature of the administrative process and mechanisms for decision making. Also, the university's official documents were reviewed and analysed to provide an overview of the university's official policies and regulations.

Secondly, a select number of faculty members were interviewed about their experiences at the university. The selection process was based on administrators' recommendations. Professors from different departments were interviewed regarding their academic experiences within the university, their involvement at the administrative level and their relations with the students.

Thirdly, focus group sessions were held with students. These sessions highlighted students' experiences at the university, considering areas such as their levels of satisfaction with the university system and attitudes and opinions about university policies.

As another way of examining the effect of the university's organisational behaviour on students, observations of the library and other facilities such as the restaurants and parking lots were conducted. Such observations contributed to evidence of students' levels of satisfaction and comfort on the campus, which is to

some extent connected to their learning experiences. During these interviews and observations, constant memoing and analysis of these notes were utilised.

Data collection began after ethical approval was obtained from the university's administration allowing access to the campus and individuals with whom interviews were conducted. The methodological approach of this study is discussed in greater detail later in the thesis.

Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis studied the impact of a Saudi Arabian private university on students' learning experiences. The following chapter discusses the social and economic purposes of universities and their general core values. It also highlights the effects of globalisation on the higher education system worldwide and in Saudi Arabia specifically.

The following chapters also offer detailed descriptions of the Saudi higher education system including a historical background, a report on societal influences on the Saudi higher education system and the challenges that face Saudi higher education. This background includes an overview of the purposes and development of higher education in Saudi Arabia and an analysis of the factors that shape the Saudi higher education system. This overview is designed to help readers establish an accurate representation of the Saudi higher education system and the role of higher education in Saudi society. In addition, this historical overview of the Saudi higher education system illustrates the nature of universities' organisational behaviours and identifies and explores factors that influence these behaviours, mainly the prominent role of Islam in Saudi society and the Saudi economy.

It is critical to emphasise both the strengths and limitations of this study; this is that there is a lack of Saudi research showing both the short and long-term impacts of higher education on students. While this is a limitation to the foundational support of relevant research to this study's goals, it too can be seen as a strength because of the contributions that it will make to significant gaps within Saudi research on this topic. Therefore, in an attempt to minimise the impact of this limited Saudi research, both existing research sources considering Saudi higher education as well as related literature from other countries (e.g., research from Europe and the United States) were considered. These sources examined the influence of organisational behaviour in colleges on student outcomes and the impact on student satisfaction. Additionally, this thesis provides an analysis of the organisational nature of higher education in Saudi Arabia and also considers the higher education system in the United States. The reason for this analysis is that the Saudi higher education system is modelled primarily on the American higher education system (Coffman, 2003). Such an overview reveals a major difference between the American and Saudi systems: the influence of Islam on the Saudi culture and higher educational organisations. This difference is critical in understanding the nature of organisational behaviours within Saudi institutions of higher education.

This thesis also offers a detailed critical analysis of the researched university. This analysis provides a better understanding of the university's mission, values, demographics of students and faculty members, programmes and departments and the administrative model. An overview and rationale for the selected methodological approach is also provided.

In sum, this thesis provides an in-depth study of the organisational behaviour of one of Saudi Arabia's private universities. It explores how the organisational structure and behaviours of the selected university influence students' learning experiences through their college years. The thesis can help administrators and decision makers pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of the selected university's organisational structure which will assist in improving the quality of services provided to students.

CHAPTER 2

THE PURPOSES OF UNIVERSITIES

Introduction

Universities' organisational cultures are shaped by many factors both internal and external to the university. To varying extents, many of these factors stem from societal influences and the relationships universities have within the broader contexts in which they are located. Relationships between universities and society are to varying degrees reciprocal with societal needs impacting university agendas and goals and universities' missions being influenced by societal and political agendas. While there are commonalities among universities' purposes and missions based on general similarities in societal challenges and needs, such as global economic issues, differences also exist, driven by social, economic and political influences specific to the area of the university. These relationships between universities and society are far from static, with agendas and goals being modified according to the changing needs and demands of students and society as well as in response to global issues.

Universities articulate their values and goals through mission statements which are used to inform individuals and society of their practices resulting from complex interactions between external influences (e.g., governmental influence, societal influence, cultural influence, economic influence) and internal influences (e.g., influence of stakeholders, administrative policies, faculty members' and students' needs and demands). According to Schein (2004), values of organisations and cultures represent their core, essence, goals, strategies and philosophies as well as their basic assumptions of people's natures, relationships, activities, realities and

beliefs. Relationships and interactions between factors influencing universities both internally and externally can create tensions among universities' values and purposes, thus increasing their complexity.

While the purpose of this dissertation was to address the impact of the organisational culture of universities on students' learning experiences, it is also important to consider the role and purposes of universities. There are some general principles and purposes which are similar across many university settings, and these are discussed briefly. The impact of social, economic and political factors on these general purposes is examined with consideration of how changes and tensions within society impact modifications to universities' organisational structures and purposes. This discussion includes an examination of how values are connected to social, economic and political factors with universities' purposes being influenced by these values.

This dissertation focused specifically on a private Saudi Arabian women's university. Therefore, understanding the organisational structure of Saudi Arabian universities, the higher education system and political and societal issues specific to Saudi Arabia was essential to the overall purpose of this thesis. A closer examination of this context is included in the following chapter. The focus of this chapter is to examine in general the purposes of universities and their organisational structures looking globally at existing research and debates in order to situate the Saudi Arabian university in a wider context. Much of this analysis has been done by writers from the United States and United Kingdom drawing on a western tradition of the purposes of universities. As a result, the analysis of Saudi Arabian universities is approached with

some care and awareness that the social, cultural and historical contexts are distinctive, yet reflect some similarities and trends faced on a global level.

A Two-Way Relationship: The University and Society

The relationship between universities and societies is reciprocal. Universities have missions and goals that need to be accomplished and achieved with the help of society's resources and people within the societies (e.g., political and financial support). Meanwhile, societies also acquire benefits from higher education and research institutions which serve the needs of the people.

Based on societies' needs and demands, universities respond and develop their missions. This response of framing education to meet society's demands has been demonstrated throughout history. For example, during the Middle Ages (1150-1500), universities tended to serve society's need for learning and emphasised the mission of teaching and researching (J. C. Scott, 2006). Then, during early modern Europe (1500-1800) where monarchies represented the dominant political power and sought the loyalty of the people, universities' missions served the government of the nation-state and accentuated the value of nationalisation. By the founding of the United States of America in 1776, American society aimed to develop a free nation with a democratic government where liberty and equity were reinforced. Higher education institutions aimed to develop the growth of democratisation by promoting academic freedom, research missions and diversity as well as providing equal access, equal educational opportunities and equal treatment for all students. By the 19th and 20th centuries, research was increasingly valued by societies reflecting the importance and value of research in improving status within society, developing the skills of the

people, improving health and stimulating economic growth. Therefore, universities operated to support research and to serve the public. Recently due to an increasing number of international students and transfer between universities, higher education institutions are becoming more responsive to the international context highlighting issues associated with multicultural learning environments, telecommunications, the development of instructional technology and other relevant topics related to the expansion of higher education on a global level (J. C. Scott, 2006).

Generally, education aims to help ensure promising professional futures for students and increases economic and social benefits at both individual and societal levels. Such a purpose emphasises the social and economic functions of education providing students with the necessary language and mathematical skills to proceed effectively with their jobs (Goodlad & McMannon, 1997).

Different national systems and countries have varying purposes for higher education which reflect their cultural, economic and political values and purposes. Meanwhile, there are some key elements in regards to the purposes of higher education that most nations and countries may agree upon or share. The *Dearing Report* (Dearing, 1997) considered prospective goals of higher education in the United Kingdom identifying four key purposes for universities to achieve by the end of the 20th century. They included the following:

1. Inspire and enable individuals to develop their capacities to the highest levels so they could grow intellectually, be well-equipped for work, contribute effectively to society and achieve personal fulfilment;
2. Increase knowledge and understanding for the sake of the university and foster its application for the benefit of the economy and society;

3. Serve the needs of an adaptable, sustainable and knowledge-based economy at local, regional and national levels; and
4. Play a major role in shaping a democratic, civilised and inclusive society (Dearing, 1997).

Universities generally tend to influence societies with social, economic and political purposes reflecting societal agendas. The following section discusses these three purposes of institutions of higher education and how universities make an impact on society.

Universities' Social Purposes

Many writers discuss the social purposes of higher education and its influence on individuals' social benefits. The subject of higher education's social purposes is a complex issue and may reflect tensions between individual needs and benefits and those of society in general. For example, what individuals want and need from higher education may not necessarily reflect the aims of higher education and vice versa. Over the years, it has been argued that education benefits both individuals and society (Sternberg, Reznitskaya, & Jarvin, 2008). On the individual level, education teaches students how to think and apply what they learn to improve the quality of their lives. It provides individuals with intellectual strength so they can become more independent and responsible in their decision making (McMannon, 1997). On a societal and cultural level, education provides the development of knowledge and training for society's citizens and nurtures an awareness of individuals' rights within society and the goals and expectations for social, economic and political development.

Some researchers (e.g., Barnett, 2000; Sternberg et al., 2008) highlight that education is not just about learning and knowledge as it extends to many other aspects of life.

Some researchers view the social purpose of higher education as that of building social and personal skills. For example, McMannon (1997) suggested that education can be considered a process of socialisation where people learn to get along with one another developing relationships and becoming active participants within society. Education also opens people's minds to the understanding and appreciation of beautiful things around them such as music and art (Goodlad & McMannon, 1997).

From a liberal perspective, higher education claims to promote social justice for all members of society whether or not they pursue degrees and further training. It is argued that having higher education degrees often improves the socioeconomic status of individuals, especially in developing countries. Meanwhile, higher education also benefits those who do not attend universities or hold degrees by developing knowledge and new technologies, contributing to local industry and improving health services. Therefore, some argue that higher education is a public good (Brennan & Naidoo, 2008).

The tension between the purposes of higher education for individuals and society in general has been highlighted by some writers who discuss the intertwined relationship between higher education and society. Barnett (2000) argued that universities have several general purposes that most members of universities work to achieve, one of which is shaping society. Universities aim to shape and develop society by advocating specific values such as respect for democracy and justice and by furthering knowledge and research development. This, in turn, improves

individuals' quality of life and produces citizens who are well-equipped with knowledge and skills to address economic and societal needs.

On a personal level, Barnett (2000) suggested that universities increase individuals' autonomy, self-development, personal fulfilment, personal realisation, self-confidence and personality. A university's vision should include elements that demonstrate a commitment to providing students with opportunities for self-discovery and development. This commitment to developing individuals reflects positively on society as citizens become more educated, confident and open-minded. Deane-Drummond (2008) had an even broader view of the purpose of universities saying that they should instil a love of learning in their students and help foster values so that citizens can assume responsibilities in the public as well as in the private spheres of their lives.

Reflecting on this liberal point of view, Barnett (2000) claimed that universities, in general, should be places where different and conflicting ideas can coexist peacefully; thus, they ought to be places where liberalism and freedom are the foundations around which life inside universities is structured. Giving students and academic staff equal opportunities to engage in study and research and emphasising the importance of freedom of speech are key factors for any educational institution to have in order to participate in shaping society (Barnett, 2000). This, in part, is accomplished by emphasising principles of democracy, equality in participation, acceptance of differences and the concept of justice. The involvement and participation of students at their colleges and in their departments in decision-making processes reflects institutions' transparency and accountability to their students (Burgess, 2008).

Bowen (1997) also explored universities' social purposes and effects claiming that universities and other institutions of higher education affect society through the changes they produce in students who eventually become productive and effective members of society. Bowen suggested that students go through a change process during their college years. For example, students experience an increase in academic and general knowledge and, as their cognitive abilities rise, their skills are developed and self-confidence improves. College educated individuals have increased potential for constructively contributing to the general social environment and for shaping the image of society through their activities and civic engagement. In sum, the value of universities lies in their social purposes in developing and reforming society.

Universities' Economic Purposes

There has been extensive debate about the economic purposes of higher education with arguments reflecting tensions between two viewpoints. On the one hand, liberal educators believe that higher education should serve the purpose of developing knowledge and intellectual inquiry, often for its own sake (Barnett & Maxwell, 2008). Educators adopting this train of thought believe that higher education should expand minds and should focus on students' knowledge levels and cognitive abilities without any direct concern for economic benefits. Students should be concerned about "knowing what" more than "knowing how" (Lomas, 1997). Liberal education represents an elite tradition of education in Europe since the early 15th century when the educational focus shifted from a religious domain to a liberal form of education (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2001). Liberal educators stand firmly against the idea of using higher education as an instrument exclusively for preparing students

for work with the goal of securing certain careers or professions; in contrast, they support the idea of the university being a place for expanding knowledge for its own sake (Hayes & Ecclestone, 2008). They further argue that universities should develop students' abilities to engage in critical thinking and reflection, enhance their level of knowledge and strengthen self-confidence which reflects positively later on in students' professional lives (Reisz, 2008). Palfreyman (Reisz, 2008), director of the Oxford Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies, also argued that liberal education contributes to the economic well-being of a country because it develops free-thinking people able to undertake top leadership posts in commercial organisations and gives direction to technically qualified middle management who, assumedly, have not had the benefit of a liberal higher education (Reisz, 2008). Some researchers (Peaslee, 1996) connect society's development and economic growth to higher education suggesting that by increasing the rate of enrolment in higher education, societies witness better economic and social status.

In recent years, and especially in developing countries, there have been increasingly strong calls for universities to emphasise the economic benefits of education and to develop knowledge-based societies by serving society's economic and market demands and by preparing students with the proper training and skills for employment (Sadlak, 1998). Governments place expectations on higher education as the instrument to respond to socioeconomic changes and as the guide for students in establishing their success and survival (P. Scott, 1995).

Governments may seek to extend control over the structures and policies of institutions of higher education in order to address these economic goals. Collaboration between the industrial sector, businesses and universities is seen as

essential in order for societies to survive global, radical and economic changes. Those advocating this approach view students as customers believing that they should receive the maximum benefit for their investment in higher education (Lomas, 1997; Lomas & Tomlinson, 2000).

Reflecting on the economic perspective associated with higher education, Mazzarol and Soutar (2001) claimed that since 1980, higher education has become a service industry for which educational institutions market themselves to attract customers, or students, worldwide. One of the main market uses of education discussed by Mazzarol and Soutar is that of international education as an export industry where countries like the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and the United States generate substantial income from having international students study in their universities, thus contributing positively to the countries' budgets.

Many countries and societies around the world also encourage their people to access higher education as a way of developing their societies and training their citizens (Sadlak, 1998). This does not necessarily mean that rich nations become rich because they are educated or that they can afford education, but it may suggest that education can help developing countries improve their economy. Sadlak (1998) observed an existing corollary relationship between economically developed societies and the increasing number of higher education students. For example, the number of Saudi students who are pursuing higher education has increased 21 times during the last 25 years and is associated with economic and industrial development within the Kingdom (Sadlak, 1998). This expansion in college attendance reflects the Saudi government's desire to increase the numbers of trained professional citizens who are able to handle market demands and serve their nation (Al Dali, 2010).

Universities also tend to collaborate closely with the business industry in pursuing research. For example, Oxford University emphasises the idea of cooperating with leading business companies so their research results are more visible in the public domain and benefit society in general (University of Oxford, 2011). Scott (1998) suggested that such collaborations are beneficial on several levels and transform universities into more enterprising institutions. From a positive perspective, research collaborations between universities and the industry benefit universities by improving the quality of research in universities owing to funding from businesses as well as benefit the business industry by providing high quality products and better trained individuals. This helps to satisfy individuals' beliefs in knowledge as a key to creating modern industrial and advanced economic societies (Net Industries, 2011).

Partnerships between universities and businesses sometimes face criticism and reflect tensions resulting from differing opinions regarding identified research focuses. Conflicting viewpoints may reflect issues regarding uncertainties about who the beneficiaries are in the collaborative relationship (e.g., ethical issues, obligations of business organisations to society, intellectual property rights of produced knowledge and research results stemming from collaboration and influences on society). Collaborative relationships between institutions of higher education and businesses sometimes require the adoption of business-oriented curricula (e.g., MBA programmes curriculum) which do not necessarily reflect Barnett's (1990) vision of higher education as the developer of students' critical thinking abilities. Business-oriented curricula and education may train students to become problem solvers instead of becoming critical thinkers and developing independent minds (Macfarlane, 1998).

According to Scott (1998), institutions of higher education have become mass global organisations reflecting important elements associated with the development and advancement of human capital, market forces and governmental agendas and politics. Most universities depend on funding and support from their national government with certain requirements and expectations associated with this funding. Benefits from universities to the government include things such as advertising the government's public agendas, implementing portions of the governmental agenda within the university and developing research areas which serve governmental interests (e.g., telecommunications and electronic research).

Universities' Political Purposes

Throughout the history of higher education, political issues and interventions of national governments have played major roles in shaping and influencing higher education systems. For example, in Europe during the early part of the 15th century, religion had a more direct influence on governments. Organisations in western societies assumed more formal religious approaches, and a higher proportion of people engaged in religious practices. Education claimed to enlighten the minds of individuals, and religion was an empowering societal force where spiritual civilisations were created (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2001). Then, with liberal shifts and the development of secular systems, education changed its approach to serve governments' needs and to increase its benefits to society. The intertwined relationship of higher education with the government intensified and increasingly became associated with the government's financial support and funding of higher education, thus translating into a degree of political power from the government over

higher education. As a result, the government sought returns from institutions of higher education in exchange for financial and political support (P. Scott, 1998).

This political aspect of higher education can be seen in the Saudi case as well. The development of higher education within the country began as political agendas as the Saudi monarchy drove educational goals. The government's role within the country in terms of education was also supported by the religious sector. Therefore, the Saudi education system, especially for women, was supervised and run by religious people. The religious influence on the Saudi government was a result of collaboration between King Abdulaziz (the founder of the current Saudi government) and the religious regimes that provided political support to the king and reformed the religious agenda in the Kingdom. The nature of the relationship was based on cooperation between political power from the Al-Saud party and religious power from the people. Therefore, the establishment of the current Saudi government was based on political and religious foundations.

The influence of religious control over the Saudi education system was evident throughout the extensive religious curriculum, the time devoted to religious studies and in the role of gender segregation within schools. Also, curricula emphasised the role of the monarchy and government as demonstrated in areas such as the history curriculum which highlighted the process of establishing the Saudi government and the glory and victory of King Abdulaziz (Prokop, 2003).

During 1950, and with the foundation of oil and the expansion of wealth, Gulf States, including Saudi Arabia, developed their educational systems from traditional ways of schooling ("Kuttab") to more modern school systems. The purpose of this development in the educational systems was to educate citizens and prepare them for

governmental work opportunities. Wealth from the oil industry was shared with the people in the form of free public education and was given as part of a political strategy to ensure system stability in the monarchies. Universities were created and supervised by governments to further the development of future graduates who would occupy bureaucratic governmental positions (Bahgat, 1999).

Political reform within Saudi Arabia is closely tied to global and economic changes. Many of the government's reforms are directly linked to the Saudi education system and reflect the government's desire to develop its education system so it suits global changes and challenges and contributes positively to the country's economy. Examples of governmental reform efforts are (a) the development of school curricula to reflect current societal and global demands and challenges, (b) the cancelling of the Department of Religious Guidance or General Presidency for Girls Education which used to supervise K-12 education for females making the Ministry of Education the only governmental supervisor for the education of both men and women and (c) the development of new universities and institutions of higher education (e.g., King Abdulla University of Science and Technology; Hamdan, 2005). These reform efforts highlight the impact of Saudi politics on education and reflect the political role in shaping the Saudi educational system. Chapter 3 highlights the challenges of Saudi higher education and how the Saudi government has responded to these challenges.

Shifting Contexts

While universities serve social, economic and political purposes, these purposes may shift over time as a result of local, national and global changes and pressures and may appear to respond to the rapid changes. Changes and pressures may

include such things as global economic crises, political unrest and shifting social and class expectations. Responses to these issues will, in part, be the responsibility of universities and institutions of higher education.

Brennan (2008) claimed that higher education has the ability to adapt to these changes becoming more economically and socially useful and efficient. As a result of the world becoming more globalised, increasing demands have been placed on researchers and industrial societies to develop their higher education systems. Altbach (2000) suggested that expanding and developing higher education positively influences (a) social mobility, (b) income level and (c) women's access to higher education. Other liberal theorists have claimed that education plays an important role in the most social progressive changes in society such as the building of human capital, the promoting of democracy and civic values and the facilitating of open societies (Brennan & Naidoo, 2008; Moore, 2004). Saudi Arabia, among other countries, appears to continue to respond to the changing demands and needs of society through adaptation of not only its government but also its educational system. Universities use their mission and value statements to present their social, economic and political roles within societies and to reflect on their changing policies. Therefore, the following section discusses the importance of mission statements and purposes in institutions of higher education.

Universities' Visions, Missions and Values

In spite of changing environmental factors influencing universities' agendas, some core foundational principles guide universities' purposes. These foundational elements are articulated in universities' mission statements, visions and values. A

number of researchers consider the importance and purpose of universities' mission statements and highlight the tensions that can result from these statements. Prior to considering the purpose of universities' mission statements, the difference between universities' mission statements and their missions is highlighted. Universities' mission statements tend to declare an institution's vision, purpose, expectations and core values and could be described as the official documents in which these purposes are articulated (Weiss & Piderit, 1999). A university's mission reflects the institution's role within society (Meacham & Gaff, 2006).

A university's vision and mission statements have essential purposes reflecting the institution's values, commitments and social and economic purposes. A mission statement is an "institution's formal, public declaration of its purposes and its vision of excellence" (Meacham & Gaff, 2006, p. 7). Universities' mission statements are often used as proof of an institutions' accountability and commitments to reach targeted goals, achieve its purposes and inspire people within universities to maximise their efforts (J. C. Scott, 2006). The purpose of a university's mission statement is to (a) declare the institution's ideology and philosophy, (b) help members distinguish the institution's vision and values, (c) provide an understanding of common and shared values and (d) inspire and motivate members within the institution. In sum, some argue that universities' mission statements help higher education institutions serve the functionality of their social, economic and political purposes (Morphew & Hartley, 2006).

It is also important to mention that mission statements are a relatively new outward manifestation of a university's purpose. Of the 68 universities in Davies and Glaister's (1996) study, only 10 institutions had issued a mission statement prior to

1989 and just one before 1980. Universities have recently been paying more attention to their mission statements through their websites and official catalogues declaring their legal and social commitments and obligations to students, faculty and society. Weiss and Piderit (1999) suggested that institutions' mission statements reflect the organisations' legal obligations and liability toward society. Mission statements also motivate an institution's members to work harder and to develop shared goals which strengthen the collegial environment within the institution. The language and content of mission statements are crucial as this is associated with improving an institution's performance. In part for legal purposes, the language of mission statements should be clear, focused and action oriented, while the content of the mission statement should emphasise the organisation's work, political and administrative approaches or agendas and orientations toward the institution's work (Weiss & Piderit, 1999).

Some researchers (e.g., Morphey & Hartley, 2006) argue that mission statements may have a negative face and may be identified as simple narrative documents that are useless and do not really reflect a university's commitments or accountability. This negative perspective of mission statements suggests that just because mission statements are legally required from higher education institutions, they do not really reflect the truth about the institution's aims and visions. It is important to understand that the purposes of universities as published on their websites are what the universities themselves are claiming to provide to their communities and their students, but simply reading these statements does not provide proof that these claims are true.

Universities' mission statements highlight some of the main purposes that have been identified and can be seen in universities' descriptions of themselves on

their websites. An examination of several western universities' mission statements suggests that the main publicly stated purpose of such universities is to provide and ensure excellent, high quality education for their undergraduate and graduate students. Part of this goal consists of working hard to strengthen the university's research base and to become selective with their researchers and subject matter in order to build reliable research institutions. Universities also attempt to attract national and international students for the sake of the institutions' publications, financial support and recognition. Additionally, universities attempt to provide equal opportunities and implement democracy within their walls while increasing the diversity of their members and promoting a sense of an international community. Mission statements are a university's window for telling the world and prospective students about the benefits of attending specific institutions and to outline the institutions' responsibilities regarding opportunities for students and researchers.

Implications for Saudi Arabian Universities

Higher education policy in Saudi Arabia, as in other higher educational systems, claims to have strong social, economic and political purposes. Government officials in Saudi Arabia believe education is the driving power to civilise the country, increase its wealth and survive challenges that will face the region in coming years (Mosa, 2000).

In addition, the Saudi government emphasises policies that support the idea of diversifying national income resources, thus reducing dependence on oil as the only source of national income. The Kingdom realised the importance of this as oil resources are likely to be depleted in the future and are also subject to the volatility of

international energy markets. Developmental plans have, therefore, consistently focused on developing and enhancing the role of non-oil sectors in the national economy (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2011).

This focus on diversifying the national economy has led the Saudi government to encourage its citizens to invest in many additional areas (e.g., agriculture, real estate, telecommunications, education and banking). One suggested method for expanding the national income is to invest in education. This focus on providing an excellent education and training to the country's people helps to ensure maintenance of high economic levels (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2011). The government is noticeably making efforts and achieving progress in this area. It is reforming its educational system; this is reflective of the country's attempt to liberalise and diversify its economy which needs to be accompanied by a suitable educational system in order to equip its citizens with the required tools, skills and knowledge to accomplish this goal (Cordesman, 2004).

Saudi educational reforms also reflect a shifting interest towards research, science and technology. Since the new millennium, Saudi society has started to witness the opening of new private universities like Prince Sultan University and Effat University as well as the establishment of new research centres like the Deanship of Scientific Research (DSR) at King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, 2011).

In 2006, the Ministry of Higher Education extended university growth within Saudi Arabia to include the possibility for foreign universities to establish campuses in the Kingdom with the hope that this would meet the demands of the Saudi higher

education system and help satisfy students' educational needs ("Part 2: Saudi education strengthens its domestic base," 2006).

King Saud University, located in the capital city of Riyadh, interpreted the new Saudi policy of reforming and improving the quality of higher education by increasing their research funding and publications which is directly correlated with their capacity to achieve a higher ranking among worldwide universities (King Saud University, 2010). In addition, King Saud University cooperates with other elite universities from outside the Kingdom to improve the quality of education. For example, Saudi faculty from King Saud University participated in the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) at King's College London which focused on improving teaching and learning in higher education (King's College London, 2010).

More recently, government perceptions of the importance of research and technology institutions in Saudi Arabia have been signalled by their creation and development within the country. One of these institutions is the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) established in 2009 which aims to develop science and technological research and is intended to have both national and global impacts. KAUST is supported by the highest authority in the Kingdom, King Abdullah himself, with such support reflecting Saudi Arabia's official desire to develop the country's higher education system and to compete and cooperate with leading research institutions around the world (King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, 2011). Development of KAUST and other reform efforts demonstrate the Saudi government's commitment to move the higher education system to a higher and stronger international level.

Economically, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is blessed with enormous oil resources which constitute the main economic resource for the country. It is estimated that with a quarter of the world's proven oil reserves, Saudi Arabia is likely to remain the world's largest net oil exporter for the foreseeable future (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2007). Saudi Arabia depends heavily on oil with the petroleum sector accounting for roughly 75% of the country's budget revenues, 45% of its gross domestic product and 90% of its export earnings (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2007). This profound dependence on oil contains inherent risks as prices are defined by the international market and are unstable due to geopolitical reasons. Thus, this dependency on a fluctuating commodity creates pressure and an urgent need to develop a strong educational system to support the development of the oil industry and maximise its benefits (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2011). Therefore, there are entire universities, such as King Fahd University for Petroleum and Minerals, specialising in most of the areas related to oil production in the Kingdom (King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, 2011).

Religion and the economy are emphasised in most government documents concerning Saudi Arabia's official policies and goals. According to the Ministry of Higher Education (Saleh, 1986), higher education tends to serve and accomplish the following objectives:

1. "Develop loyalty to God and provide Islamic education which, in turn, increases students' responsibility before God and encourages them to use their abilities for useful purposes;

2. Enable the Saudi educational system to provide the highly trained manpower necessary to run the country's increasingly sophisticated economy;
3. Prepare competent and qualified citizens to perform their duties in the service of their country for the progress of their nation in light of sound Islamic principles and ideology;
4. Provide gifted students with opportunities to continue higher education in all the fields of academic specialisation;
5. Enable the country to perform its leadership role in building human civilisation on Islam's genuine principles that steer mankind to righteousness and spare humanity from material and atheistic deviation;
6. Encourage translation to Arabic, and encourage scientific research to help find solutions for local and global problems; and
7. Offer training services and courses to enable graduates who are already working to keep pace with the new development" (Saleh, 1986, p. 19).

These objectives highlight the main purpose of Saudi education which is to emphasise Islamic, Arabic and cultural values. Since most higher education institutions are under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education, they are required to follow these official purposes and implement them within their universities' missions.

The recent initiation of private universities in Saudi Arabia has expanded the country's vision of higher education beyond public only institutions. This shift in redefining higher education has resulted in both similarities and differences in purpose and general structures between public and private universities in Saudi Arabia. One similarity is that both public and private institutions of higher education are under the

supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education which ensures quality teaching and learning. Both types of institutions also emphasise Islamic values and beliefs and share Saudi values and traditions on their campuses.

Differences also exist between the organisational structures and missions of public and private universities. Public universities in Saudi Arabia provide most of the knowledge and disciplines found in universities in other countries. Some of the country's research institutions and medical schools are associated with several of the leading hospitals in the Kingdom. Public universities are fully funded by the Saudi government representing a significant portion of the Saudi annual national income. Unlike public universities, private universities offer students contemporary and demanding programmes such as business administration, computer science, English literature and law. They target labour market demands and work on preparing students with high skills and training that are required by the labour market. Private universities are more commerce-oriented institutions seeking to improve the quality of education for the sake of national economic and industrial development. Private universities have more flexible administrative systems than public universities. They are not fully funded by the Saudi government and are considered to be new, young institutions; therefore, adaptations to regulations and the implementation of new ideas is easier unlike public universities which have existed for many years and are considered to be bureaucratic and centralised. Another main difference between public and private universities is the cost of attendance. Public universities are free to all Saudi citizens with students receiving monthly allowances from the universities. Meanwhile, the cost of private universities is significant with students being responsible for their tuition. The choice of attending private or public universities in

Saudi Arabia is a personal choice and is related to students' expectations and financial situations.

Conclusion

Universities are influenced by factors both internal and external to universities. While needing to respond to the individual needs of students and faculty members, universities are also influenced by societal, economic and political demands. The demands and needs of both members of the university and society may shift over time. These changes are a result of societal and global growth and challenges and are reflected in universities' social, economic and political purposes. Education is critical to responding to such changes and helping society to progress.

Universities worldwide appear to share a declared set of purposes and values; however, their way of enacting them varies significantly over time depending upon their specific contexts. The purpose of individual institutions of higher education can be seen in their mission statements, visions and values. These principles serve as foundational elements in spite of seeming variability at times in society.

The following chapter explores the historical background of the Saudi Arabian higher education system. It also illustrates factors that influence the education system within the Kingdom. This overview provides a better understanding of the mechanism of the Saudi educational system as well as a deeper understanding of Saudi culture.

CHAPTER 3

THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN SAUDI ARABIA: AN OVERVIEW

Introduction

Since this thesis examines a university in Saudi Arabia and how its organisational nature influences students and their learning experiences, exploration of how universities in Saudi Arabia operate as organisations is needed. Therefore, this chapter examines the Saudi higher education system and the organisational structures of universities within the country. As discussed in the previous chapter, universities have two-way relationships with society. In addressing this critical aspect of the organisational structure of Saudi universities, this chapter also examines the historical context of Saudi Arabia in an attempt to consider the implications of aspects of Saudi society in relation to higher education. A discussion of the purposes, challenges and development of higher education in Saudi Arabia is also included.

Saudi Arabia: The Country



Figure 3.1. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (U.S. Department of State, 2011).

Saudi Arabia is located in the heart of the Middle East, occupying four-fifths of the Arabian Peninsula, and is the largest country among the Arabian Gulf countries covering approximately 2.2 million square kilometres (Central Intelligence Agency, n.d.). It has a population of 27,136,977 people including about 5.6 million resident foreigners (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Central Department of Statistics and Information, 2010). About 67% of the Saudi population is under the age of 30 with an approximate ratio of 1.17 males for every female (Central Intelligence Agency, n.d.). The capital of Saudi Arabia is Riyadh with the official language being Arabic, although English is also widely spoken and understood.

The modern Saudi government was established in 1932 by King Abdul-Aziz and has since been governed by a monarchical system with a Council of Ministers and Consultative Council with no officially recognised political parties. The Basic Law,

adopted in 1992, declared that Saudi Arabia is a monarchy ruled by the sons and grandsons of King Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, and that the Holy Qur'an is the constitution of the country, which is governed on the basis of Islamic law, or the Shari'a. Currently, the Kingdom is governed by King Abdullah who has an official title as the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques.

Islam in Saudi Arabia: Religious Aspects and the Influence on Society

Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of Islam and home to Islam's two holiest places: Mecca and Medina. Being the host country for Muslims around the world during the pilgrimages of Hajj and Umrah as well as the “Qiblah” (direction for Muslims located throughout the world to face during their prayers) gives credibility to the Kingdom in terms of Islamic values.

Consistent with other aspects of Saudi society, the influence of Islam is embedded within the higher education system, with general Islamic principles serving as a guide for organising the structures of the country's universities. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the fundamental components of the religion which strongly influence social organisations, relationships and attitudes.

There are five fundamental pillars of Islam: (1) a statement of belief in one God, Allah, and Muhammad, his prophet; (2) the performance of five prayers per day; (3) fasting for one month per year during Ramadan; (4) paying Zakat, or the religious tax, if financial means permit and (5) performing Hajj or a pilgrimage once during one's life if capable (Al-Buraey, 1985). These pillars serve to remind Muslims of Allah. For example, the tax is a reminder to someone who is rich of the duty to give

back to society. The Hajj is a gathering of many Muslims in one place in a humble and simple manner to demonstrate submission to the one God.

Values in the Islamic religion are instituted to help Muslims perfect their actions and become closer to God; therefore, Muslims practice these values and morals on a daily basis attempting to do so without hesitation (Nasr, 2002). Muslims should always keep God in mind and seek his blessings when they are working, eating, contacting others, dealing with family members, engaging in financial transactions and maintaining their appearance.

For Muslims, Islam is not just a religion; it is a way of living that influences all aspects of a Muslim's life and reflects adherence to a code of ethics and morals. The most predominant principle controlling the lives of Muslims is that all actions, regardless of their nature, are considered religious and demonstrate the worship of Allah. This means that doing anything good is charity and is rewarded. Practically speaking, religious acts may mean smiling at someone on the street, cleaning litter from the road or teaching another person. Studying, sleeping and laughing are also considered religious acts and are methods of worshipping God; therefore, they must be done in an appropriate manner in order to be rewarded by God (Al-Buraey, 1985; Salahi, 2006).

Treating others kindly and fairly is a guiding moral principle of Islam. This includes principles of kindness and fairness in situations requiring justice. For example, Allah stated in the Koran, "When you judge between people, to judge with justice" (Koran, 4:58). This requirement of justice is requested of all Muslims, even toward their loved ones, as demonstrated in the following examples.

“O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do” (Koran, 4:135).

Muslims are also expected to extend justice to their enemies.

“O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to Piety. And fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do” (Koran, 5:8).

The Prophet Muhammad said

“People, beware of injustice, for injustice shall be darkness on the Day of Judgment” (Islam Guide, n.d.).

Islam also incorporates the principle of anti-racism. The Prophet stated

“Your God is one and your forefather (Adam) is one. An Arab is not better than a non-Arab and a non-Arab is not better than an Arab, and a red (i.e., white tinged with red) person is not better than a black person and a black person is not better than a red person, except in piety” (Islam Guide, n.d.).

Another verse in the Koran states

“And eat up not one another’s property unjustly (in any illegal way; e.g., stealing, robbing, deceiving, etc.), nor give bribery to the rulers (judges before presenting your cases) that you may knowingly eat up a part of the property of others sinfully” (Koran, 2:188).

Public feelings and morals are also to be respected and are reflected in the following text in the Koran:

“And most surely you conform (yourself) to sublime morality” (Koran, 68:4).

Seeking knowledge and education is also encouraged according to Islamic values. In the Koran, the first few revealed words are the following:

“Read! In the name of your Lord who created — Created the human from something which clings. Read! And your Lord is Most Bountiful — He who taught (the use of) the pen, Taught the human that which he knew not” (Koran, 69:1-5).

“Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know” (Koran, 39:9).

“Those who are more knowledgeable are not in equal with ignorant: Allah grants wisdom to whom He pleases and to whom wisdom is granted indeed he receives an overflowing benefit. Say, “O my Sustainer! Increase my knowledge” (Koran, 20:114).

The Prophet also issued similar statements supporting the value of education and knowledge. For example, he stated

“A person who follows a path for acquiring knowledge, Allah will make easy the passage to Paradise for him.” He also said, “A Muslim is never satiated in his quest for good (knowledge) till it ends in Paradise” (Abd-Allah, n.d.).

These foundational religious elements governing Saudi society are embedded within universities. Their relationship to the organisational structures of universities and the higher education system will be discussed later in this chapter.

Saudi Arabia and the Economy

Of critical importance to the Saudi higher education system is the economy. As discussed in the previous chapter, society and its universities have a two-way relationship that shifts as changes occur in both settings. In Saudi Arabia, changes in the economy at both the level of the country and globally have impacted the goals and structure of higher education.

Critical to these economic changes is the primary reliance of Saudi Arabia on the oil industry as the main source of wealth and income. According to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (2009), Saudi Arabia possesses 20% of the world's proven petroleum reserves and ranks as the largest exporter of petroleum. The petroleum sector accounts for roughly 75% of budget revenues, 45% of the gross domestic product and 90% of export earnings. Apart from petroleum, the Kingdom's other natural resources include natural gas, iron ore, gold and copper.

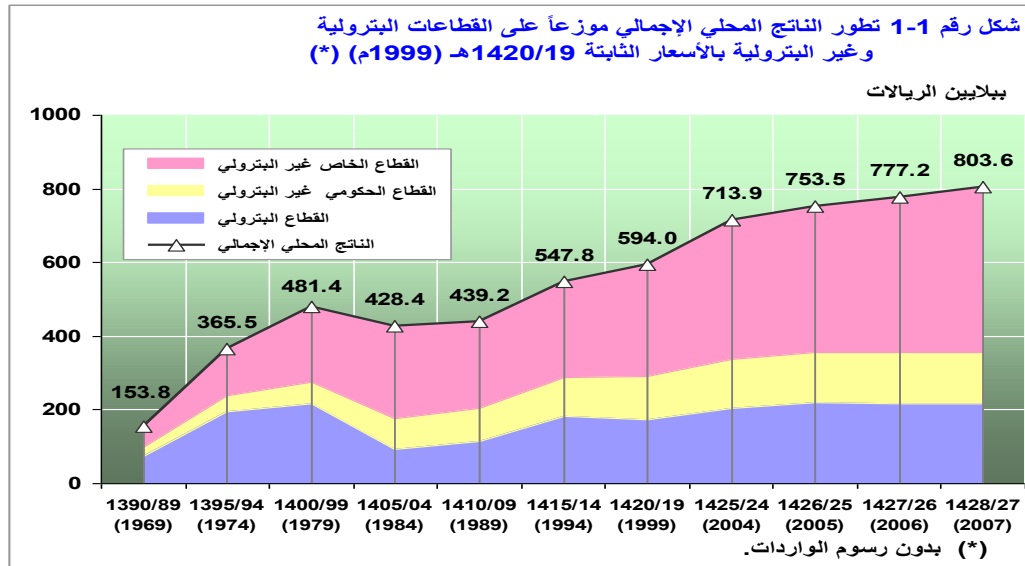
Saudi Arabia is the largest oil exporter supplying 20% of the world's proven petroleum reserves. Saudi Arabia has an oil-based economy with strong government controls over major economic activities. The petroleum sector accounts for roughly 80% of budget revenues, 45% of the GDP and 90% of export earnings. As such, Saudi Arabia is mainly dependent on oil for its development (Central Intelligence Agency, n.d.).

While the country is currently dependent on its oil industry, the Saudis know very well that the world will not wait for Saudi Arabia's oil reserves to reach their last drops before finding alternatives; this fact, thus, creates significant pressure on the Kingdom to, first, make better use of remaining oil and, second, to create a more

diversified economic base through the process of privatisation that encourages the development of other economically valuable activities such as building new economic and industrial cities, increasing spending on basic infrastructures and improving the foreign investment environment. Saudi officials increasingly recognise the importance of diversifying the national income, especially after joining the World Trade Organization (WTO). Efforts to diversify the economy so the country is able to face global challenges and compete with other industrial countries include developing the petrochemical industry, improving the quality of national products, supporting domestic small businesses and investors, promoting agriculture, developing national human resources and encouraging privatisation, or private sectors, to operate and invest in country enterprise zones or economic cities.

Country enterprise zones, or economic cities, aim to promote economic diversification through the creation of over a million new job opportunities, the building of homes for over 4 million residents, and through contributing \$150 billion to Saudi Arabia's GDP. Examples of the country's recently established economic cities include King Abdullah Economic City located off of the Red Sea, Knowledge Economic City located in Al-Madinah and Jazan Economic City (Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority, 2009). The purpose of these cities is to form a partnership between the industrial sector and technology zone with the private sector. Industrial cities provide integrated services that meet the needs of investors, contribute to the development of the community and preserve the environment (Saudi Industrial Property Authority, n.d.). These efforts towards diversifying the economy are represented in Figure 3.2 below reflecting increased production in non-petroleum

sectors while maintaining stable levels of oil productivity (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2009).



- Non-governmental, private sector
- Non-petroleum, governmental sector
- Governmental sector

Figure 3.2. GDP development in Saudi Arabia based on private, governmental, non-petroleum and petroleum sectors (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2009).

Strengthening the Economy through Educational Initiatives

In addition to diversifying the economy, the Saudi government is attempting to increase the quality of the educational system. Rapid economic and political changes on a global level led the Saudi government to believe that development and reform were needed in order to maintain economic stability and to continue its growth (Saleh,

1986). Therefore, Saudi Arabia paid significant attention to the development of the education system as a way to respond and deal with labour and market demands and to diversify the economy, thus strengthening the country's human capital (Donn & Al Manthri, 2010).

The idea of increasing human capital through education is reflected in statements and actions from the king and by public officials and leaders. For example, in 2005 after announcing the budget, King Abdullah said

“Realizing the importance of improving the standard of education and training of our sons and daughters so as to enable them to contribute positively to building of our dear country and to preserving its achievements, we have approved spending 26% of the allocations of the general budget of the new fiscal year on the general and higher education, and technical and vocational training for boys and girls” (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2005, Paragraph 5).

Recent trends in educational spending in Saudi Arabia reflect increases. For example, in 2004, overall education spending increased by 24% from the previous year, and higher education was identified as a top priority for the Kingdom's immediate future. The budget of 2007 allocated an amount equal to \$23.28 billion for education, including technical and vocational training, an increase of nearly 11% on the level budgeted for 2006 ("Saudi budget for 2007: Focus on social and physical infrastructure," 2007). For the year 2010, the King announced a budget allocating more than a quarter of overall funds (\$36 billion) to education, representing a 13% increase over 2009 in a total budget of more than \$146 billion ("Saudi Arabia's record budget for FY 2010 includes focus on education," 2009).

Since 2007, there have been increases in educational projects, including the building of more than 2,000 new schools with 4,800 schools currently under construction. There are also plans to renovate 2,000 existing school buildings. As for higher education, plans are underway for opening new universities in Tabuk, Albaha, Najran and Riyadh; a new university hospital (in addition to five university hospitals already under construction); completion of infrastructures of other universities; building of 56 colleges and the opening of 19 new colleges ("Saudi budget for 2007: Focus on social and physical infrastructure," 2007).

The General Organisation of Technical Education and Vocational Training, King Abdul Aziz City for Science and Technology and the Institute of Public Administration all received increases in their budget allocations ranging from 15% to 33%. The budget for the technical and vocational training sector includes the building of 7 new technical colleges, 12 new technical and vocational training centres, 5 new technical institutes for girls and 9 new vocational training centres ("Saudi budget for 2007: Focus on social and physical infrastructure," 2007).

In addition, scholarship programmes to study abroad have been established in medicine, engineering, computer science, law and accounting, with many young Saudi students competing for these scholarships. Scholarship opportunities are available to study in other parts of the world including the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, China, India, Singapore, Malaysia and South Korea. In addition to addressing student needs and building communities, these strategic goals have also been adopted to develop and improve international relations with targeted countries ("Part 2: Saudi education strengthens its domestic base," 2006).

The government has encouraged the private sector to take a more active role in higher education believing that this will facilitate improvement. Interest free loans are available to individuals and organisations who are interested in opening private colleges. The government also eased a restriction regarding establishing joint universities with foreign institutions. For example, a coalition of 32 American universities under the umbrella of the Texas International Education Consortium was involved in the process of establishing Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University in the eastern part of the Kingdom, with all 17 academic programmes taught in English (Haass, 2009). European countries have also collaborated in this endeavour to expand higher education in Saudi Arabia; for example, more than 38 higher educational institutions in the United Kingdom and other universities from Australia and Singapore made inquiries to the Saudi government about the possibility of opening branch campuses in the Kingdom ("Part 2: Saudi education strengthens its domestic base," 2006).

The Saudi Higher Education System: An Overview

Higher education began in Saudi Arabia when the founding father of Saudi Arabia, King Abdul-Aziz bin Saud, sent a delegation of 14 students in the 1930s to study at universities in Egypt. Twenty years later, in about 1950, the first college was established in Mecca featuring an Islamic studies programme. The placement of this college in Mecca highlighted the importance of religion in developing the education system in Saudi Arabia. After 7 years of experience in Mecca, the experiment was moved to Riyadh where King Saud University was established in 1957. With 21

students and a staff of 9, it was the first and the only university in the nation (Alsalem, n.d.).

Owing to the growth and demands of society, Saudi Arabia has continued developing and expanding its higher education system to serve as many students as possible by providing them with high quality educational opportunities. Currently, Saudi Arabia has 24 public universities throughout the country serving more than 500,000 undergraduate and graduate students. Universities provide access to educational opportunities for any Saudi who is interested in obtaining a higher education degree. However, there are differences based upon gender for educational offerings and opportunities. Universities are free to those who attend providing monthly allowances to those enrolled. The country also has 8 private universities, 21 private colleges and a growing number of community colleges (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Higher Education, 2010).

Most of the higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia are administered and supervised by the Ministry of Higher Education. The ministry's responsibilities are to raise levels of communication and coordination between higher education institutions, approve the establishment or the modification of any universities' academic programmes, coordinate policies with government ministries and agencies based on the nation's needs and assist in the Kingdom's continuing development. The ministry authorises both the creation of universities and the programmes offered (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Higher Education, 2010). In the case of private universities, the Ministry of Higher Education provides supervision to ensure that they follow the ministry's missions and core values. However, private institutions have their own

roles when it comes to administration, students' qualifications, faculty qualifications and other issues (Al Dali, 2010).

Saudi universities and institutions offer diplomas and undergraduate (bachelor's degrees) and graduate degrees (master's and doctoral degrees) in various specialisations within the sciences and humanities. A bachelor's degree requires 4 years in the field of humanities and social sciences and 5 to 6 years in the fields of medicine, engineering and pharmacy. English is the medium of instruction in the technological and science fields, while all other subjects are taught in Arabic (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Higher Education, 2010).

This section provided a general overview of the higher education system in Saudi Arabia. The following section explores the structure and organisational nature of Saudi higher education.

The Organisational Nature of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia

Higher education, as well as general education in Saudi Arabia, follows an official policy that has been implemented consistently for many years. Official educational policies, which were discussed in chapter 2, emphasised spirituality and loyalty to God and stressed the idea of providing high quality educational and training systems with Islamic values as their framework. Official educational policies also seek to benefit Saudi citizens and to emphasise the contribution of education to Saudi economic growth (Saleh, 1986).

Although the higher education system in Saudi Arabia claims to be independent, it is still influenced by and structurally modelled after educational systems from other countries around the world (Net Industries, n.d.). The influence of

western higher education systems is visible within the mechanisms and operating systems of Saudi Arabia's universities but is less evident in their missions and values. While adopting elements of western models, higher education in Saudi Arabia reflects its own unique characteristics such as the embodiment of Islamic ideals into university frameworks. Coffman (2003) claimed that, contrary to what might be expected, the modelling of Saudi Arabia's higher education on western models does not cause significant controversy as long as Islamic values and beliefs are maintained within the organisational structures of the universities. Coffman also argued that Saudi society has few reservations in adopting western notions of a secular science model and in using English as the primary language for instruction.

As discussed in chapter 1, Al-Buraey (1985) outlined the most common version of the administrative model for Islamic organisations in his book, *Administrative Development: An Islamic Perspective*. The fundamental principles discussed by Al-Buraey are seen in Saudi institutions of higher education. As Al-Buraey (1985) described, in Islamic society, leadership does not mean absolute authority over people; instead, it means sharing decisions and consulting with others as advisors (*Shura* principle). Although the leader finalises decisions, there is a process before decisions are reached. To ensure justice and equality, representatives from different levels of society and advisors contribute to the decision-making process at different levels and circumstances.

The source of any administrative decisions is the Islamic rules as prescribed by the Koran, *Sunnah*, or as they are called collectively, *Sharia*. There are two types of rules: general rules and administrative rules. General ethical rules are applicable to all situations. These include being fair and kind, and condemning injustice, lying, the

misuse of public funds or property and bribery. Aside from these general rules are a distinct set of rules applicable to the administrative aspect of any given organisation (Al-Buraey, 1985).

The Islamic administrative model could be described as a value-oriented model that seeks to maximise Islamic values and ethical standards. This model also emphasises cooperation among members rather than competition. Helping, caring and nurturing are some of the most important values of this model. Leaders should protect their people and ensure that the benefit of the group is a priority and the ultimate goal. The Islamic administrative system is influenced by society and shaped by social factors such as education, technical knowledge, religion, learning and law. The Islamic model has a very strong ability to adapt to changes in society and the environment and is founded upon a clear religious base. Accordingly, rules and regulations are subject to modification if circumstances change as long as the changes do not violate fundamental Islamic principles (Al-Buraey, 1985).

The main aim of education from an Islamic perspective is to develop human beings through knowledge. It is a religious obligation for all Muslims, both male and female alike. Education under the Islamic umbrella emphasises the importance of knowledge that builds societies utilising a collective approach where shared values and beliefs are accentuated and faith is centralised (Shah, 2006). According to Shah (2006), Islamic educational leadership highlights the importance of educators teaching with knowledge and understanding, the role of leaders guiding with wisdom and values and the responsibilities of parents providing care and commitment to their children's education.

Structurally, the Saudi higher education system is described as a centralised system with narrow levels of independence and autonomy. Public higher education institutions have no ability to hire, fire, control salaries and regulate degree qualifications. Most important decisions come from the Ministry of Higher Education (Alkhazim, 2003).

The education system in Saudi Arabia is politically influenced by government agendas, with the Ministry of Higher Education controlling the context of the curriculum and university admission and recruitment policies (Coffman, 1996). For example, the history curriculum strongly emphasises the development of the Saudi government and monarchy as well as the accomplishments of the Saudi kings. The curriculum aims to strengthen Saudi identity and loyalty to the royal family (Prokop, 2003) reflecting political power and control over higher education. Also, the Saudi monarchy has maintained a strong partnership with society's religious segment from the establishment of Saudi Arabia's modern government reflecting the influence that political and religious parties have on each other (Doumato, 1999).

Challenges Faced by the Saudi Higher Education System

The Saudi higher education system has been criticised for not being able to respond to the constant challenges and changes that are happening locally and globally (Alkhazim, 2003). For example, the Saudi higher education system faces major challenges because rising demands from students to enrol in institutions of higher education result in competition for limited spaces, difficulties to meet national needs for employees with high quality training and skills and problems associated with securing resources (Alkhazim, 2003).

One of the biggest issues facing the Kingdom is that of population increases resulting in greater numbers of young people attending universities and higher educational institutions (Altbach, 2011a). Approximately 67% of the country's population is under the age of 30 and 37% under the age of 15 (Donn & Al Manthri, 2010). The number of high school graduates is estimated at 243,000 with just 160,000 openings for higher education (Alkhazim, 2003). Owing to increasing demands on universities, the government has increased spending and opened new institutions.

The Kingdom also suffers from a high unemployment rate; currently about 5.4% of the country's total population is unable to find jobs (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Central Department of Statistics and Information, 2010; Quandl, 2015). Governmental work opportunities are not sufficient to employ all graduating students, and students entering the private and industrial sectors do not always possess necessary qualifications upon graduation. Therefore, the higher education system experiences significant pressure to respond to the demands of the labour market in preparing students with proper knowledge, training and skills (Donn & Al Manthri, 2010). The education system is required to develop its traditional pedagogical model, improve teaching methods and provide multiple learning and educational opportunities as a strategies to produce well-educated, highly trained, skilled employees who are ready and suitable for national workforce demands (World Bank, 2007).

Another crucial challenge for the Saudi higher education system is that of gender segregation and the education of women within the educational system. The following section describes the nature of educating women in Saudi Arabia and the difficulties faced by females during their educational journey.

Gender and Its Impact on Education in Saudi Arabia

Issues surrounding gender influence all aspects of Saudi society, including that of education. Owing to the fact that this research was conducted on a women's campus and all of the research participants were female, it is important to highlight issues surrounding women's education in Saudi Arabia and to provide an overview of how their education has changed over time.

The first official schooling for girls in Saudi Arabia began in 1960. The original purpose of this schooling was to prepare girls for motherhood based on Islamic values and educational theories. Girls' education was supervised by a committee identified by the king as the General Presidency of Girls' Education (GPGE). The GPGE worked separately from the Ministry of Education and was overseen by religious members (Al Rawaf & Simmons, 1991). In 1970, the government reinforced the official policy of educating women through its declaration that

“The object of educating a woman is to bring her up in a sound Islamic way so that she can fulfil her role in life as a successful homemaker, an ideal wife, and a good mother, and to prepare her to perform those jobs which suit her nature like teaching, nursing, and medicine” (El-Sanbary, 1994, p. 144).

Saudi society was initially quite hesitant about the idea of educating females. With the support of King Faisal and his wife, people began to accept the idea of sending women to school under the supervision of conservative religious scholars. By 1976, the first university campus for women was established at King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah followed in 1979 by a campus for women at King Saud

University. In the initial stages, most campuses for women offered degrees in education, nursing, public administration and other humanities and arts subjects with recent additions of law and interior design. These fields of study reflect the narrowness of career options for females in Saudi Arabia (Hamdan, 2005; Mazawi, 1999). Over time, the higher education system progressed dramatically, with many universities opening their doors for young Saudi girls. More colleges and subjects have been added since then, but women are still not allowed to pursue studies in engineering, petroleum, media and the army.

Segregation by gender in educational settings persists in Saudi society today and is a highly distinctive and controversial aspect of the organisational structure of Saudi institutions of higher education (Hamdan, 2005). The educational environment is segregated by gender in accordance with local Islamic law, with classes for males and females taught in separate buildings. Direct interaction between females and males who are not close relatives is not permitted except on rare occasions (Al-Hariri, 1987). Owing to cultural and social regulations in Saudi Arabia, females do not drive, but instead are provided with transportation to schools by male relatives or drivers (Baki, 2004). Undergraduate female students are not allowed to leave university campuses before noon without their family's permission and are not allowed to be on-campus after normal operating hours. Female campuses are run by female staff (although all decisions are made by males), and courses are taught by female lecturers or by male lecturers via closed-circuit television (Baki, 2004). Top administrative positions are held by men. Women faculty members and administrators have been found to experience isolation and are overburdened with administrative responsibilities (El-Sanbary, 1994).

The issue of gender segregation restricts roles (e.g., mixed gender interactions are forbidden, gender restrictions are in place for studying some fields), thus limiting women's professional job opportunities. As women constitute 64% of the enrolment in Saudi universities, it has been claimed that a serious challenge confronts Saudi society in regard to the waste of human capital (Donn & Al Manthri, 2010).

Differences in opportunities for Saudi males and females are not limited to education alone, but are also seen in professional settings. Saudi women suffer from the policy on segregation limiting their job opportunities. Policies are very strict when it comes to gender segregation at the work place. This is demonstrated by the Ministry of Commerce's discontinuation of commercial and business licences issued to females to start their own businesses unless they have a male supervisor who has legal authorisation to interact with government officials and to perform official bureaucratic roles (Doumato, 1999). Such difficulties limit women's contributions to the Saudi economy and restrict their roles as effective and productive citizens in comparison with men. Job opportunities available to women include limited positions such as teachers, university lecturers and health care professionals fitting the cultural criteria of being "suitable women's nature occupations" (Doumato, 1999, p. 570).

These policies create inequitable situations for young Saudi women who want to achieve better professional careers and to have an impact in their society. This situation reflects an opposite view to the ideal Islamic model where males and females are treated the same when it comes to the roles of worship, behaviour, manners, values, obligations and banishments. Apparently, the ideal Islamic model is not really practiced as it should be when it comes to gender issues within Saudi society; there is an apparent difference between the teachings of Islam and practice in

some areas of Saudi society. Instead significant pressure and influence from religious conservative studies are behind these inequitable arrangements.

This may be evidence of opposing viewpoints that exist in Saudi society regarding the education of women. On the one hand, liberal viewpoints reflect a belief that education should be mixed with no boundaries being placed between the education of males and females, while conservatives support the idea of segregation in educational settings. As the government is composed of individuals with differing viewpoints, education policies and programmes reflect these complicated social preferences. As a result, the building of new universities reflects both viewpoints. For example, the Princess Nora Bint Abdul Rahman University (PNU) was established in 2010 as a women's only university in contrast with the opening of the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) in 2009 with a mixed gender campus (Onsman, 2011). The establishment of PNU is a reflection of the Saudi government's sympathy with cultural values and customs supporting gender segregation, whereas KAUST represents more liberal viewpoints.

With respect to gender segregation and the Saudi higher education system, it is critical to remember that 63% of higher education Saudi students are female, and almost half of the Saudi population is female. This has led to a significant demand from Saudi females to attend universities and an even bigger demand for employment opportunities. Therefore, Saudi higher education is under pressure to respond to these demands and to balance cultural values with current demands and circumstances.

Cultural Models as a Framework for Understanding the Organisational Structure of Saudi Higher Education

Islam is strongly embedded in Saudi society and is largely reflected in the Saudi culture. Schein (2004) articulated a cultural model providing a framework for better understanding the nature of culture and its impact on the organisational structure of society, which, in this case, will be used to better understand the organisational structure of Saudi universities. Schein argued that in order to understand and improve the functionality or the mechanism of any organisation, it is important to first understand the concept of the culture itself and the characteristics identifying that culture.

Schein (2004) identified culture as a group of people sharing norms, values, beliefs, patterns of behaviour, rituals, traditions, history and other critical elements such as structural stability, depth, breadth and patterning or integrity. In order to understand cultures generally and how they function and impact their members and organisations, Schein analysed the concept of culture classifying it into the following three levels:

1. *Artefacts*. This is considered to be the first level where common characteristics of the culture are observable and the behaviour of its members visible (e.g., language, clothing style, manners and rituals).
2. *Espoused beliefs and values*. This level provides greater depth to understanding cultural beliefs, values, strategies, goals and philosophies. In this level, the idea of individuals' influences on group members is emphasised. Beliefs and values at this level surpass those of the artefacts' level, as they have a deeper and stronger connection to group members. Members at this

level must witness success from their leaders before adopting group beliefs and values.

3. *Basic underlying assumptions.* This is considered to be the deepest cultural level. Beliefs and values at this level become non-negotiable, non-contestable and non-debatable and are often taken for granted. Strong agreement and harmony exist among group members.

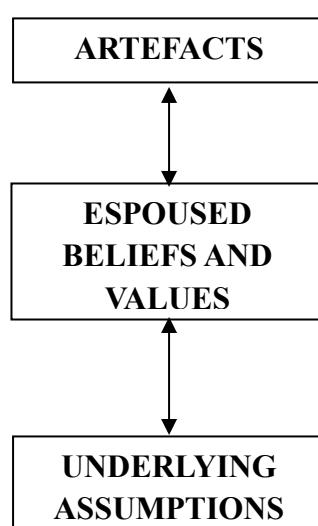


Figure 3.3. A model of organisational culture (Lomas, 2012).

Schein's (2004) model, as depicted in Figure 3.3, can be used as a framework for examining the level of cultural strength and involvement within university settings by considering the three cultural levels. For example, the artefact level is represented in the utilisation of the Arabic language for teaching in many of the courses and the rooms for prayers located on campuses. The second level of Schein's model, espoused beliefs and values, can be observed in controversial issues such as the covering of women's faces, the issue of women driving and the segregation of men and women by

classroom and campus and in programmes of study; even though, at the same time, people agree on the formal agendas of Saudi Islamic values and beliefs. The third level of Schein's cultural model, underlying assumptions, can be identified within Saudi universities as the strong religious beliefs which are not debatable or open for negotiation but which underlie the majority of decisions made by universities.

Therefore, when considering the impact of organisational structure of Saudi universities on students, consideration must be given to all three cultural levels. By considering only surface and highly visible aspects of campuses, deeper and more foundational underlying beliefs and principles are missed which are fundamental to the overall structures of universities.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the organisational nature of the Saudi higher education system as one part of researching the impact of the Saudi university on students, which is discussed in the following chapters. Since Islam is strongly embodied in Saudi life, a general overview of Islamic principles and values was cited and discussed. This overview provided a better understanding of Islamic values and why they cannot be isolated from the Saudi culture and more importantly the Saudi higher education system. To better explain the Saudi higher education system and its organisational nature, this chapter offered a historical background of the higher education system in Saudi Arabia and how it is affected by religious and economic objectives and purposes. It also presented the official governmental objective of higher education in Saudi Arabia and the influence of the Islamic administrative

model on the system. This chapter also highlighted some of the main challenges that face the higher education system including that of gender segregation.

Owing to the lack of Saudi researchers who have studied the impact of college on students as well as considering the influence of western higher education systems on the Saudi system, the next chapter depends largely on western research which demonstrates, theoretically and statistically, the influence of colleges on students and the impact of colleges' organisational behaviours on student outcomes. Therefore, the following chapter addresses models describing ways in which the organisational behaviour of colleges and universities in the United States and United Kingdom impacts students and their outcomes post college.

CHAPTER 4

LITERATURE REVIEW: THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL STUDIES OF UNIVERSITIES' ORGANISATIONAL MODELS AND BEHAVIOURS

Introduction

Research has shown that colleges' and universities' organisational behaviours impact students. Universities' organisational behaviour was referred to by Berger (2000) as "the actions of organizational agents at a college" (p. 180). Key organisational agents in a university setting include students, faculty members, administrative leaders, political figures and community members. The organisational behaviours of these agents, therefore, ultimately influence the functioning of universities and the success of students (Berger & Milem, 2000). Tinto (1994) found that colleges and universities have a significant impact on students' persistence and decisions about whether or not to remain in college. Astin (1993b) also studied the impact of college experiences on student outcomes by examining how college and university environments shape student performance and influence students' experiences. He found that the nature of students' experiences in college impact their degrees of satisfaction.

Bergquist (1992) suggested that obtaining a full understanding of academic organisational cultures requires considering universities' educational purposes and contexts; universities' historical roots; the leadership models applied by universities and universities' values, assumptions, roles and regulations. Many factors influence and help define organisations within academic systems. For example, the way in which university members interact and communicate with each other, the dividing of

responsibilities between the faculty and administration, boundaries the system possesses, the purpose and mission reflected by each institution (e.g., the degree of emphasis on research compared with the degree of emphasis on teaching) and the types of environmental inputs and outputs all reflect the complexity and flexibility of the system and lead to different kinds of academic organisations (Birnbaum, 1988).

The organisational composition of universities can be complex in nature with many components and factors influencing the functioning and effectiveness of a university. Numerous researchers and theorists have attempted to define organisational cultures using a range of models and frameworks as their guides. A synthesis of these models is provided in this chapter offering a single framework as a foundational guide for understanding the organisational behaviours of universities. Heed must be taken not to generalise one model to all universities or to the organisational structure of a single institution, as universities often reflect elements of more than one organisational model within their systems (McNay, 1995).

In examining the influence of universities' organisational behaviours on students' learning experiences, this chapter draws mainly upon literature from the United States and United Kingdom. Emphasis on research from these countries is due to the limited body of scholarly work in this area in Saudi Arabia. While an exact comparison between systems cannot be made, drawing upon such literature provides a basic framework for understanding and analysing higher education within the Saudi context. The overall intent of this chapter is to provide a foundation for examining the organisational structure and behaviours of the selected private Saudi university included in this study.

Organisational Models of Institutions of Higher Education

Ultimately, this dissertation sought to understand the impact of the organisational nature of a selected Saudi institution of higher education on students' experiences and outcomes. In consideration of this goal, it was necessary to look at categorised organisational characteristics of institutions of higher education to examine how these impact students. While none of these models precisely fit the university being studied, these models provided an underlying theoretical framework for considering the university's organisational structure selected for this study.

Birnbaum (1988), Bergquist (1992), Morgan (2006) and Bolman and Deal (2008) offered models depicting different organisational structures. Components of their models can be categorised into the following five areas representing different types of organisational structures: bureaucratic, collegial, political, symbolic and systematic. Table 4.1 highlights the main aspects of their models as it relates to these five categories. The following section synthesises aspects of these four models through a discussion of these five organisational types.

Table 4.1

Organisational Models and Classification of Their Theories

	<i>Bureaucratic</i>	<i>Collegial</i>	<i>Political</i>	<i>Symbolic</i>	<i>Systematic</i>
Birnbaum (1988)	Bureaucratic	Collegial	Political	Anarchical	Cybernetic
Bergquist (1992)	Managerial	Collegial	Negotiation	Anarchical or Subjective	
Morgan (2006)	Organisations as Machines	Organisations as Psychic Prisons	Organisations as Political Systems	Organisations as Cultures	Organisations as Organisms
Bolman and Deal (2008)	Structural	Human Resource	Political	Symbolic	

Bureaucratic Organisational Structures

In bureaucratic models, organisations are run in the same manner as machines where every member of the organisation serves a distinct purpose. The organisation is managed by a head, whether it is one person or a group of senior executives who are charged with making decisions for the organisation (Morgan, 2006). This model reflects a centralised formal structure where every member knows the goals of the organisation and the strategies needed to achieve those goals. Within organisations of this type, individuals are generally clear about roles, responsibilities, rules, their scope of authority and expectations (Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2008). People are also grouped in their work settings according to areas such as their knowledge base, skills and geographical location (Bolman & Deal, 2008). The system is hierarchical in its leadership where adherence to carefully presented steps and procedures is

important in the decision-making process. Most decisions occur from the top-down, and leaders are the only people in charge of making decisions and establishing rules (Birnbaum, 1988; Morgan, 2006).

Bergquist (1992) described cultures reflecting bureaucratic attributes as managerial cultures. In these cultures, the operational procedures and processes of organisations are valued, and the performance and competence among administrators, faculty members and students is important. Members within this culture have specific roles, responsibilities and duties. For example, faculty members' primary responsibility is teaching using specific instructions and a curriculum that have been prepared by the administration. Leadership in the managerial culture has a formal, hierarchical structure where there is clarity in communication and specificity of roles, duties and positions.

Strengths of organisations reflecting bureaucratic models include clarity of the organisation's goals and mission, the focusing of work to achieving these goals, hierarchy among members' positions, the clear classification of authority and the rationality of the decision-making process. McNay (1995) also suggested that bureaucracies have a positive "face" providing people with equal opportunities where they can earn what they deserve based on standardised procedures. Also, the bureaucratic model provides security and stability within the organisational environment (Dopson & McNay, 2000). Similarly, Strange (1991, 1994) suggested that highly bureaucratic universities which present less complex, more formalised, more centralised and less innovative campuses have a positive influence on students' comfort levels with these campuses.

Despite the fact that the bureaucratic model is considered to be the most popular organisational model in colleges and universities (Perrow, 1979), it also has some inherent weaknesses. Aspects of this model reflect weaknesses in the way organisations function and behave, thus conflicting with some of the values of higher education. For example, the bureaucratic model concentrates on reaching goals and following prescribed roles with less attention to individual efforts and abilities, with success being attributed to organisations rather than individuals. Such an attitude conflicts with the autonomy of universities and underestimates or discourages values held by the organisation's members (Berger & Milem, 2000). McNay (1995) also claimed that this model detracts from organisational growth and leads to static work environments with limited motivation to improve and progress.

Collegial Organisational Structures

The collegial model is socially oriented and reflects a caring and nurturing environment while maintaining an emphasis on institutional demands and requirements (Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2008). Cultures of collegiality strongly reflect beliefs emphasising the good of individuals and their positive influence on an institution's values and results. Developmental academic institutions value the teaching and learning process and encourage direct and open communication between students and the faculty (Bergquist, 1992). Continuing interaction and shared activities among members are important components of this model, and clarity and honesty play essential roles in such interactions. Members are loyal to their community's beliefs and people, and in some cases, unwritten rules have a stronger influence than written ones (Birnbaum, 1988).

Leadership in developmental cultures is considered complex and non-traditional and emphasises the idea of collaboration, equality, democracy and autonomy (Bergquist, 1992). It reflects fewer orders and regulations and more suggestions and agreement. Members in these types of organisations openly discuss their opinions and seek the involvement of others as a way of showing the importance of shared values and the exchange of ideas (Birnbaum, 1988). The collegial model is described as a free model where liberty, autonomy and academic independency are important features (McNay, 1995). Faculty members and administrators have authoritative voices and equal opportunities in the decision-making process. Usually, decisions are made that include members' contributions. Members' interactions within the system are informal, and the president is viewed as a spokesman rather than the boss (Birnbaum, 1988). The collegial culture respects the independence of faculty members and encourages autonomy within members' activities, thereby leading to long-term commitments by the staff (Bergquist, 1992).

A strength of this model includes being favoured by faculty members in colleges and universities as such organisations are very socially oriented (Kuh et al., 2005). Faculty members often appreciate the sense of democracy, respect of values, consideration of people's needs and involvement of others in decision-making processes provided by these types of organisations. This model recognises the voices of faculty members and administrators and provides them with equal opportunities to express themselves. Organisations reflecting this model encourage faculty members to submit a greater number of papers for publication because scholarly research work is highly valued (Birnbaum, 1988).

The collegial model also shows some weaknesses in the way it functions. For example, in large universities with increased numbers of faculty members and administrators, it can be challenging to agree upon decisions and share common values. These challenges can be due to differing interests and views of the world. Other features that weaken the collegial model are limitations reflected in the decision-making process such as only involving the faculty and administration with little attention to student voice and rights. Reflected in such processes is a prioritisation of faculty and administrative needs which conflict with the main purpose of higher education which is to serve students and maximise the development of academics and talent (Berger & Milem, 2000). McNay (1995) also commented that the collegial model could be abused as a free, open model where individuals, such as administrators or faculty members, may be unethical and misuse their authority.

Political Organisational Structures

Colleges and universities with political organisational structures have a driven interest and clear goals where members negotiate, build coalitions among group members and compromise to achieve results that serve their interests and advantages (Bergquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1988). The interactive nature of this model is based on two elements: coalition and negotiation. Coalitions, with the purpose of achieving goals and maintaining power, usually occur between two or three group representatives. Negotiation is the leading step to reaching coalitions between groups (Morgan, 2006). This requires extensive discussion and bargaining among group members promoting personal and group agendas and is followed by negotiation from group representatives in an effort to obtain the most advantageous results meeting

their interests. Faculty members in these environments believe that change is brought about through confrontation and competitions, with decisions being based on bargaining, negotiations and power (Bergquist, 1992).

Power is the controlling element in this model “which influence[s] who gets what, when and how” (Morgan, 2006, p. 170). Power is maintained by position, information, expertise, control of rewards (e.g., the ability to bring in money or political support), networks and connections and personal power (e.g., charisma or strong skills; Bolman & Deal, 2008). Relationships in political organisations is structured and defined by members’ interest and power (Morgan, 2006). Usually, political organisations are not considered as one community but contain several communities with varying interests and goals. Members are either situated inside or outside these groups and communities which leads to the decentralisation of a university’s organisational structure (Bergquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1988).

Competition, negotiation and the utilisation of power are considered to be beneficial features of the political model and have positive effects on organisations. Universities need political aspects such as these in order to compete with other institutions and to move forward in becoming leading organisations (Berger & Milem, 2000). Organisations reflecting the political model emphasise the importance of processes and evaluation to achieve targeted goals. While this method can be useful to achieving goals, it also has drawbacks as results and valuing completion become the focus with less emphasis on collaboration. Features of the political model may also conflict with foundational principles of higher education that emphasise autonomy and equity. The use of power and competition among members may serve individuals’

self-interest and be misused to achieve personal goals (Berger & Miley, 2000; Bolman & Deal, 2008).

Symbolic Organisational Structures

The symbolic model reflects teamwork, harmony, shared meanings, concerns, values and collective efforts and goals. Leadership is informal, where motivation and aspiration exist and are used to strengthen values and the meaning of organisations (Morgan, 2006).

Organisations are seen as cultures within this model where members' rituals, stories, customs and metaphors direct the structure of organisations (Bolman & Deal, 2008). People within these organisations have shared values and beliefs which guide their efforts (Morgan, 2006). The symbolic model uses a culture's values, rituals and traditions as a way of resolving conflicts, increasing predictability and defining organisational features (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Morgan, 2006).

The symbolic model can also be categorised as an anarchical model and a subjective model (Bergquist, 1992). The anarchical model represents organisational events and processes that are unclear and ambiguous, with organisational members using symbolic behaviours as a way of making sense and clarifying ambiguity. This subjective model focuses on the way people change and make a difference after experiencing the same events.

These types of organisations emphasise the power of symbolic behaviours and their effects on the organisations. The values and symbolic features of these organisations' members reflect respectful and rich environments that illustrate the importance of members' rituals and traditions. Characteristics of the symbolic model

strengthen organisations by increasing their power when it comes to making changes or adapting to new policies within organisations. On the contrary, organisations may find it a difficult task when they need to change their culture and modify their values and symbolic features. Another weakness is the ambiguity associated with the symbolic model as it conflicts with the needs for certainty and clarity within higher education (Berger & Milem, 2000).

Systematic Organisational Structures

The systematic model can be viewed as a cybernetic, open system that integrates the previous four organisational models (Birnbaum, 1988; Morgan, 2006). Cybernetic systems reflect the automatic ability to recognise and sense changes within the environment and then to control these changes and adapt them in order to maintain stability within organisations. Changes within cybernetic organisations come usually as a result of negative feedback or sudden crises within organisations. This negative feedback, or these bad situations, drives the administration's attention towards correcting the error (Birnbaum, 1988).

This model encourages the linking of the environment with organisations rather than promoting isolated, organisational characteristics. The systematic model allows for the integration of internal structures of organisations with external changes, thus creating a sense of interdependence between the two aspects. Cybernetic organisations focus more on the input of information rather than the output of data as mechanisms for detecting problems (Birnbaum, 1988). For example, cybernetic universities would sense organisational errors or problems by a drop in the number of admissions' applications rather than a decrease in students' learning outcomes (Berger

& Milem, 2000). Leadership in this model is methodical in dealing with needs that must be satisfied in order for the organisation to survive (Morgan, 2006). Leaders of cybernetic organisations do not usually intervene with all of an organisation's work; rather, they mainly carry on with routine obligations and tasks. Usually, organisations run themselves unless disturbing situations or negative feedback is acknowledged, at which point, organisational leaders intervene to solve problems and put the organisations back on track (Birnbaum, 1988). The decision-making process is usually influenced by circumstances associated with the surrounding environment providing leaders with space for flexibility (Berger & Milem, 2000; Morgan, 2006).

The main strength of a systematic organisation can be viewed in its relationship with the surrounding environment, its ability to detect errors or sudden changes and its capability to move toward sudden changes or problems, fixing them immediately. Another strength includes an emphasis on the organisation's needs with consideration given to satisfying these needs in order to ensure survival of the organisation (Morgan, 2006). A main weakness can be seen in the way cybernetic organisations mainly monitor their progress through feedback regardless of outcomes; this may reflect ignorance regarding valuable and relevant issues needing to be addressed and solved. Also, the capability of organisations to receive and adapt to environmental changes may reflect limitations in their ability to influence surrounding environments and make positive changes.

In sum, institutions of higher education reflect various organisational structures and can be identified by the following five categories: bureaucratic, collegial, political, symbolic and systematic. These different models distinguish universities from one another and can be used as an analytical tool for understanding

their organisational structures. The following section examines the relationship between universities' organisational structures and student outcomes.

Relations Between Organisational Structures and Student Outcomes

Research considering the influence of organisational behaviour on student outcomes at institutions of higher education is limited (Berger & Milem, 2000). However, the research that does exist indicates a relationship between the organisational structures of universities and student results (Astin, 1993b; Berger & Milem, 2000; Tinto, 1994; Weidman, 1989).

A primary purpose of universities is that of educating and training students; therefore, it is important to examine the nature and quality of students' experiences in university settings. Student experience refers to academic and social behaviours and perceptions which include students' involvement in academic and non-academic activities, faculty-student interactions and other kinds of socialisation during the college years (Berger & Milem, 2000). These experiences impact both students' academic and social outcomes (Berger & Milem, 2000). When considering the experiences of students at universities and the outcomes following higher education, multiple factors should be examined. Some of these factors include student characteristics, organisational attributes of universities and aspects related to relationships and the socialisation process (Astin, 1993b; Berger & Milem, 2000; Tinto, 1994; Weidman, 1989).

The following section examines several models which consider the relationship between universities' organisational structures and student outcomes. The main models highlighted in this section are the following: Astin's (1993b) input-

environment-outcome model, Tinto's (1994) model of individual departure from institutions of higher education, Berger and Milem's (2000) model and Weidman's (1989) conceptual model of undergraduate socialisation. The primary organisational characteristics associated with student outcomes for each model are highlighted in Table 4.2 and are discussed further in this section.

Table 4.2

Conceptual Models Associated With Student Outcomes

<i>Model</i>	<i>Organisational Characteristics Associated With Student Outcomes</i>
<i>Astin (1993)</i>	Inputs Environment Outcomes
<i>Tinto (1994)</i>	Formal and informal aspects of academic and social systems External and internal factors
<i>Weidman (1989)</i>	Intervening factors Students' collegial experiences Academic dimension Socialisation
<i>Berger and Milem (2000)</i>	Students' entry characteristics Organisational characteristics Students' college experiences

Astin's Input-Environment-Outcome Model

Astin (1993b), in his input-environment-outcome (I.E.O.) model, studied the impact of college experiences on student outcomes by observing the same students throughout their 4-year college experiences. In his model, Astin identified

characteristics that students bring with them to colleges. He considered universities as inputs in the study. He summarised student input characteristics as follows: students' high school academic achievements and scores; students' attitudes toward attending college; students' religion; their parents' level of income, educational background and occupation; and students' race, ethnicity, age, gender, marital status and citizenship. These characteristics formed the foundation of his study and provided a better understanding of the differences among entering college students. This data also helped Astin examine students' choices and goals during their time attending college and connect it to college environmental effects.

The second part of the I.E.O. model dealt with studying the environment. Astin (1993b) looked at college programmes, policies, faculties, curricula, financial aid, peer characteristics, educational experiences, choices for major fields of study, residential options, students' time of involvement and students' participation in different activities. These environmental components had an influence on students' characteristics and were eventually shown to be connected with outcomes reflected in the change and growth of students.

Astin (1993b) used the word "outcome" in his study referring to it as changes that occur in student characteristics after exposure to components of the environment. He identified two types of outcomes, with the first being cognitive outcomes described by students' knowledge, logic and psychological well-being. Second, was the affective outcome, which referred to students' behaviours. He measured student outcomes by looking at students' personalities and self-concepts, attitudes, values, beliefs, behaviours, academic achievements, career development and satisfaction with the college environment. This measurement took place at the conclusion of students'

four years in college. By considering students' outcomes, comparing them to students' inputs and analysing the changes that occurred during students' years in college, Astin concluded that college has an impact on students' satisfaction with their college experiences. For example, students who participate more in their colleges' extracurricular activities, who live on campus and use campus facilities and who receive strong attention from their professors tend to express higher scores of satisfaction.

Tinto's Model of Individual Departure from Institutions of Higher Education

Tinto's (1994) model explores reasons behind students' departure from higher education institutions and explains the factors influencing these departures. A diagram of his model is included in Figure 4.1 and is discussed in this section.

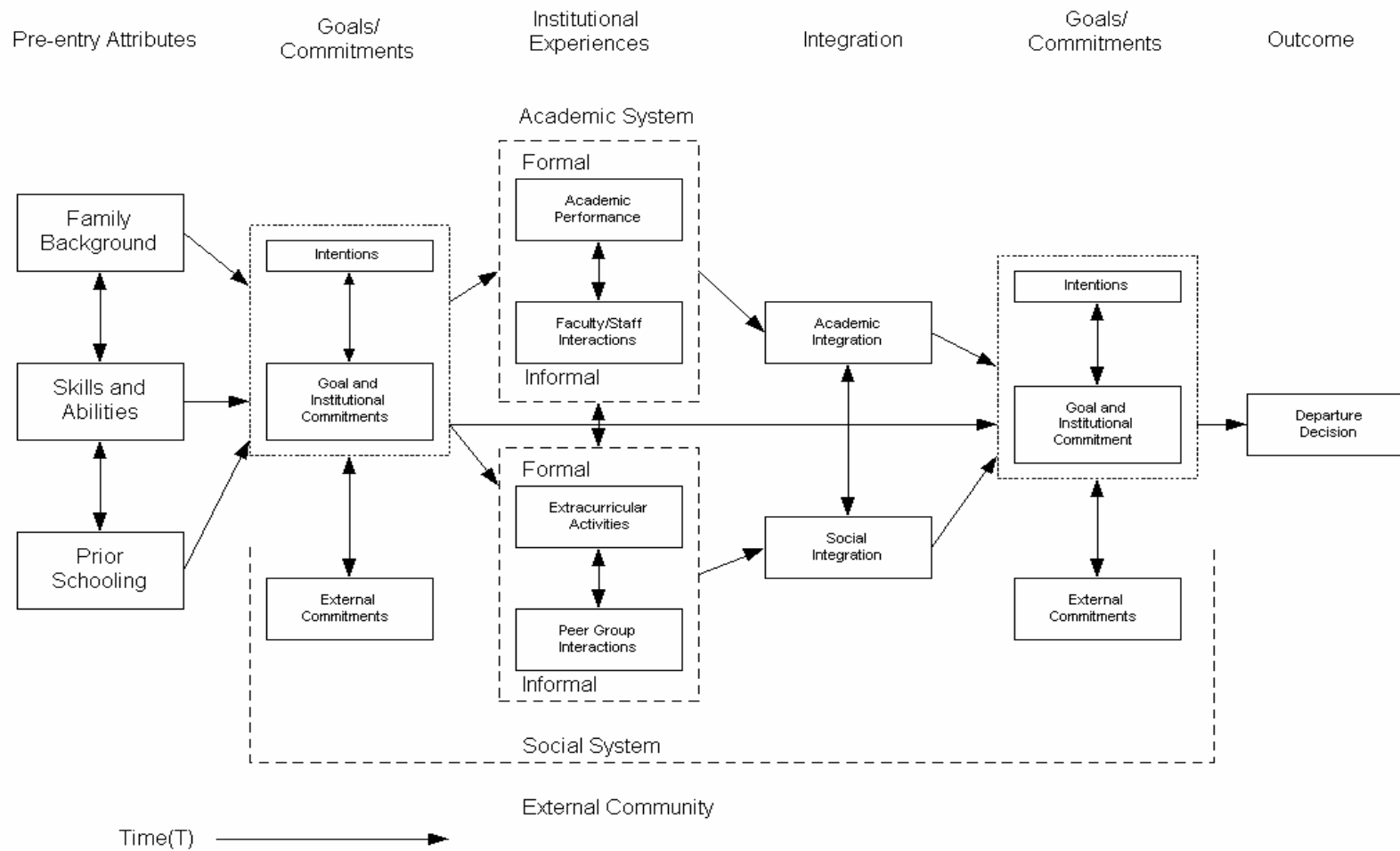


Figure 4.1. Tinto's model of individual departure from institutions of higher education (Tinto, 1994).

Tinto (1994), in his model, explained that a college or university's ability to retain students depends on many factors including psychological and environmental dimensions. His model emphasises the importance of integration between both the formal and informal aspects of academic and social systems within colleges and universities. This integration plays a major role in college student retention. In other words, Tinto argued that individual intellectual ability and academic achievement are not enough to ensure students' persistence and degree completion. A combination of the levels of academic or intellectual abilities and social fit with the institution reduces the chance of students' early departure.

Tinto (1994) considered external factors that students bring to college. These external factors included students' family backgrounds, skills, pre-college academic experiences, gender, ethnicity, financial status and other personal attributes. These factors impact students' decisions related to persistence in college by influencing their intentions (i.e., level and type of education, desired career) and by influencing students' commitments (i.e., degree of student commitment to achieve their intended goals). Another important external factor affecting students' departure is students' external communities, especially for students who work, have families or are faced with other obligations. In such cases, university pursuits may not be the main engagement or even priority of the person.

Tinto (1994) also discussed the effects of both formal and informal academic and social systems of institutions on students. The formal part of academic systems includes standards of academic achievement indicating minimum performance levels for student achievement. The academic system also includes an informal part in which interactions between faculty members and students influence students' decisions to

leave or stay. These interactions can motivate and encourage students to improve, persist and increase their sense of membership and belonging within their institutions. The social system also reflects formal and informal aspects within institutions. Formal aspects of the social system include such things as student involvement in extracurricular activities and campus initiatives. Informal social aspects are defined by interactions among students attending the institution. Tinto's (1994) research indicated that the more students interact with their peers and become involved in college-related activities such as clubs, teams or student unions, the greater their chance of finishing their degrees.

The integration between institutions' academic and social systems impacts students' intentions and commitment to finishing their degrees and graduating. It also increases an institution's commitment to retaining students and assisting them in reaching their desired goals. The level of integration between academic and social systems determines decisions related to departure (Tinto, 1994).

Weidman's Conceptual Model of Undergraduate Socialisation

The conceptual approach of undergraduate socialisation explained by Weidman (1989) in his model tends to provide a better understanding of how colleges impact students by emphasising the socialisation process that occurs in higher education. In other words, students' college experiences are not limited solely to their academic development; it goes beyond an increase in knowledge to include the development of social skills, decision-making abilities and the capability of being effective members of society. Figure 4.2 depicts Weidman's model and is discussed in greater detail in this section.

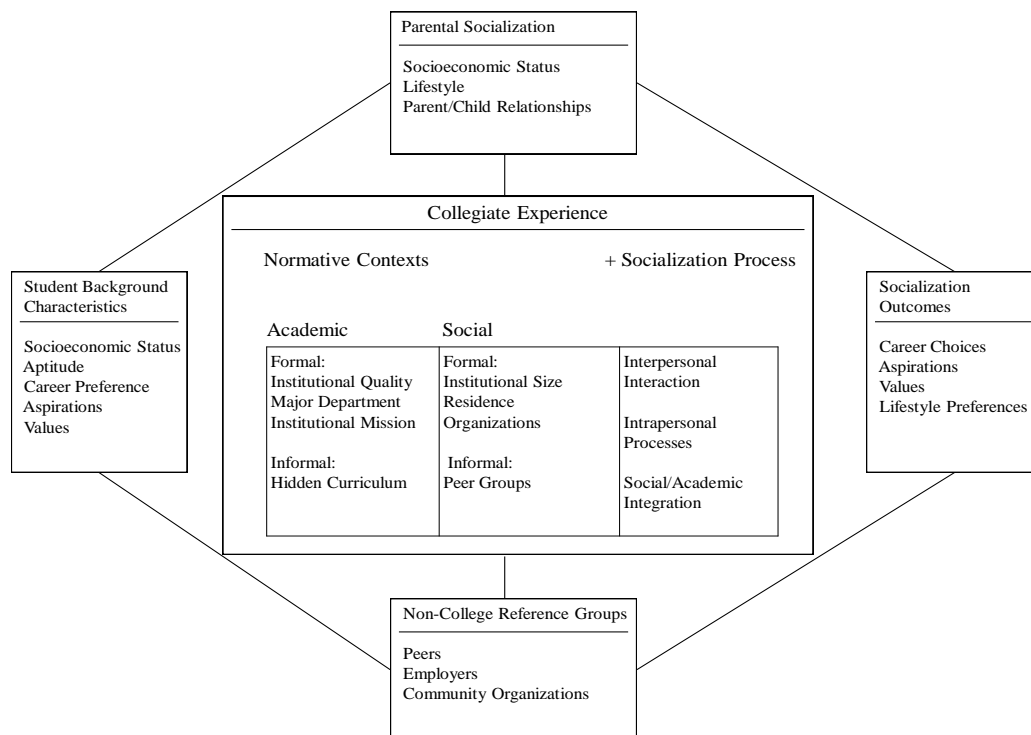


Figure 4.2. Weidman's conceptual model of undergraduate socialisation (Weidman, 1989).

Weidman (1989) claimed that there are many intervening factors that contribute to the effects that college has on students in their lives. These factors include the following:

1. *Students' background characteristics.* This factor considers parents' characteristics such as their socioeconomic status, sources of income, educational backgrounds and occupations. Parental factors influence students' decisions and experiences with college. For example, parents' socioeconomic status can influence their children's options of which colleges to attend. Students' academic abilities also shape their background characteristics and are indicated by such things as standardised tests, aspirations and values.

2. *Parental socialisation.* This refers to students' relationships with their parents and parents' expectations of their children. Parents often have clear influences on students which may be reflected in students' career choices and plans for the future. The factor of parent socialisation appears to be strong at the beginning of students' college years but decreases over time owing to personality growth and students' increasing independence.
3. *Pre-college normative pressure.* This refers to pressure applied by non-college members, including parents and friends, which help shape expectations and images that students have about college prior to enrolment.
4. *Non-college reference group.* This includes people from the community, churches, mosques, temples, synagogues, chapels, work and relatives who are non-college members and who offer support and encouragement to students throughout their college years.
5. *In-college normative pressure.* This refers to changes or the reinforcement of values and goals that students have during their college years from faculty members and college administrators.
6. *Collegiate experience.* This occurs when there is academic and social integration. Weidman (1989) explained the stages of student socialisation during their college years, which include normative contexts and the socialisation process.
 - a. *Normative contexts.* The first stage is the normative context which refers to the level of students' exposure to two major dimensions that are described as follows:

- i. *Academic dimension.* The academic dimension takes two major forms: formal and informal. The formal dimension refers to the quality of an institution where prestige and reputation play a major role. It also encompasses an institution's mission providing an explanation of the institution's purpose and expectations. The formal dimension also includes the academic departments of an institution and their influences on students. The informal academic dimension indicates the hidden curriculum, roles and expectations a faculty has of their students.
 - ii. *Social dimension.* The social dimension concentrates on students' involvement in extracurricular activities and residential choices. (It is suggested that living on campus offers better chances for socialisation among students.)
- b. *Socialisation process.* The second part of students' collegial experiences is the socialisation process. This process of socialisation includes interpersonal interactions, interpersonal processes and integration. Interpersonal interactions can be explained by the degree of attachment between institutions and students, by interactions between faculty members and students and by the frequency of these interactions. Interpersonal processes include student assessments and their satisfaction with college. Integration includes a combination of both social and academic aspects of the college experience. Social integration refers to the relationship between students and faculty

members, peers and administrators, while academic integration refers to students' acceptance levels of faculty members' expectations and feedback related to their academic performance. According to Weidman (1989), in addition to organisational factors influencing socialisation, they also impact choices following students' undergraduate studies.

Berger and Milem's Model

Berger and Milem's (2000) model was built on the work of Tinto (1994), Astin (1993b) and Weidman (1989). In their model, they looked closely at the university as an organisation and investigated the way this kind of organisation acts on and influences student outcomes. They developed a model explaining the impact of the university's organisational behaviour on student outcomes. Their model helped scholars understand the nature of organisations in higher education and the importance of these institutions as powerful factors in students' college experiences and outcomes. Their model is used as a theoretical framework for this thesis. Their model examines ways in which students' entry characteristics and organisational characteristics affect student outcomes by influencing peer group characteristics and experiences during the college years. Students' entry characteristics are identified as the personal features students bring with them to college. These include students' gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, academic achievements, values, parents' educational backgrounds and similar factors. These characteristics not only shape the peer group climate of a university but also affect students' college experiences in general.

Berger and Milem (2000) claimed that not only do students' entry characteristics influence their college experiences and outcomes, but students are also affected by the organisational characteristics of a university. The effects of an organisation's characteristics on students can be viewed from two different angles. The first is the structural, demographic features of the organisation, and the second is the college's dimensions of organisational behaviour. Structural, demographic features of an organisation refer to the size of its student body, the college's selectivity in its admission procedures, its degree of control of the institution (public versus private), the college's location and other features of the college environment. On the other hand, dimensions of college organisational behaviour refer to the ways in which college organisations behave, be it bureaucratic, symbolic, collegial, political, systematic or a combination of these models. Both the demographic features of an organisation and the dimensions of organisational behaviour have an impact on students' college experiences and the characteristics of the student body, both of which are connected to students' college outcomes.

After studying students' entry characteristics and organisational characteristics, Berger and Milem (2000) also considered students' experiences during their college years and the relationship of these experiences to student outcomes. This part of their study contributed to the model's illustration of how peer group characteristics and students' experiences within college influence their outcomes. Peer group characteristics reflect elements of the college environment and illustrate the level of common values and homogeneity among students. Characteristics that students bring with them and attributes of the colleges themselves affect the shape and strength of peer groups and influence students' levels of involvement in college activities.

In sum, Berger and Milem's (2000) model articulates two major factors influencing student outcomes from higher education. The first factor includes characteristics of both the students and the colleges as organisations. The second factor is external happenings, or those factors that influence students' behaviours and perceptions, such as students' peer groups and friends. The model then connects these two factors illustrating how they shape students' outcomes resulting from their college experiences. The figure below provides a basic overview of Berger and Milem's (2000) model.

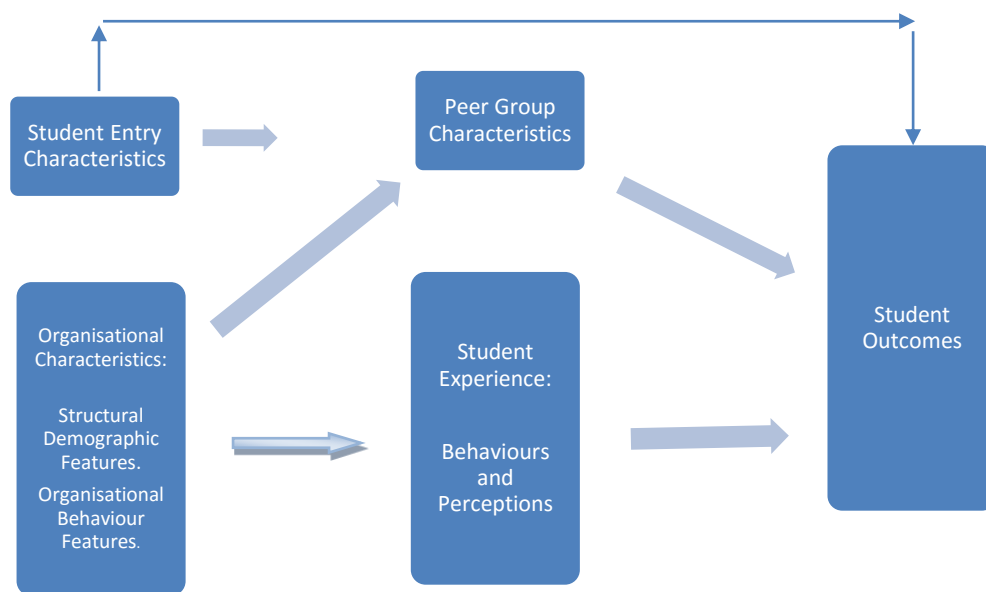


Figure 4.3. Berger and Milem's (2000) conceptual model for researching university organisational impacts on student outcomes.

From Astin's (1993b) input-environment-outcome model, Tinto's (1994) model of individual departure from institutions of higher education, Weidman's (1989) conceptual model of undergraduate socialisation and Berger and Milem's

(2000) model, there are common key factors in terms of universities having the greatest structural impact on student outcomes. These include elements of universities' environments and cultures, student characteristics and backgrounds, the level of students' involvement and integration with extracurricular activities and students' usage of university facilities. Relationships and interactions between these factors highlight connections between universities' structures and students' experiences and outcomes. Astin's (1993b) input-environment-outcome model, Tinto's (1994) model of individual departure from institutions of higher education, Weidman's (1989) conceptual model and Berger and Milem's (2000) model provide a basic foundation for understanding the nature of the selected Saudi private university and the way it impacts student experience. Berger and Milem's model is centrally important for the current study because it shows that in universities in the United States, there is a connection between universities' organisational structures and behaviours with students' learning experiences and outcomes. Since the Saudi higher education system is generally patterned after the higher educational systems in the United States and the United Kingdom, it was meaningful to use these models in the single case of the Saudi private university, while also critically evaluating the applicability of Berger and Milem's model.

Relationship Between University Structures and Student Experiences

The previous section illustrated conceptual models and theoretical concepts explaining ways that colleges' organisational behaviour affects students. This section examines a body of research considering the relationships between college experiences and college structures on students' learning, persistence, involvement,

socialisation and development. The purpose of the research examined in this section is to help universities improve in efficiency and effectiveness for their students.

While the individual models, which were summarised in Table 4.2, are helpful in providing a framework for understanding the relationship between universities' organisational behaviours and structures on student outcomes, it is uncommon for organisations to reflect aspects of solely one model. Therefore, it is helpful to consider elements of these frameworks evident in actual empirical studies. The following section considers empirical studies examining the relationship of universities' organisational structures and student outcomes. These studies are categorised based upon themes from their findings using the following headings: institutional effectiveness; teaching and learning; and student involvement, integration and persistence.

Institutional Effectiveness

The definition of an effective college or university may vary depending upon who defines success or how success is defined. Studies by Smart, Kuh and Tierney (1997) and Cameron (1988) considered the effectiveness of universities and colleges by examining factors such as student outcomes and satisfaction, employee satisfaction, available resources and environmental influences. Details of their studies are included below.

Smart, Kuh and Tierney (1997) studied the effectiveness of organisational structures of colleges by considering the role of organisational culture, environmental factors and the decision-making process on college effectiveness. In their study, they

classified organisational culture into four categories, which can be summarised as follows:

1. *Clan culture*. Norms, values and traditions play an important role in the decision-making process, and faculties have moral commitments to their institutions. This culture is similar to the symbolic model described earlier in this chapter.
2. *Adhocracy culture*. This culture reflects openness and an ability to adapt to change in the environment. People are willing to take risks to ensure their institution's strength and viability.
3. *Bureaucratic culture*. Rules, regulations and formal pressures take place, and people's relationships are formal.
4. *Market culture*. Competition occurs, and decisions are made by people in power. This culture is political in the way it is run.

Smart, Kuh and Tierney (1997) suggested two major categories for the way decisions within institutions of higher education are made. First, rational/collegial decisions reflect a democratic decision-making process. Decision making within this category reflects discussion and consensus among people where institutional benefits are a priority. The second category of decision making is autocratic/political where one person with power makes decisions.

Besides an institution's culture and their decision-making processes, Smart et al. (1997) included environmental variables that describe institutions comprising their size, financial status, enrolment trends, emphasis on transfers (in terms of percentage of total enrolment in college parallel programmes), emphasis on careers (in terms of the percentage of the total enrolment in technical/career programmes), adult emphasis

(in terms of the percentage of the adult enrolment in continuing education programmes) and union status (whether or not the campus is unionised).

The examination of institutional culture, environmental factors and the decision-making process helped them identify the nature of an institution and its effectiveness. Institutional effectiveness was measured, in this study, by using Cameron's (1988) dimension of organisational effectiveness which included the following: students' educational satisfaction, students' academic development, students' career development, students' personal development, faculty and administrators' employment satisfaction, professional development, quality of teaching, system openness and community interaction, ability to acquire resources and organisational health. Results from their study indicated that these factors influence organisational effectiveness and that each organisation reflects its own unique culture which portrays either a positive or negative influence (Smart et al., 1997).

Since Smart et al. (1997) utilised Cameron's (1988) work as the framework for their study, it is important to illustrate Cameron's findings about the effectiveness of organisational culture. Cameron (1988) developed nine dimensions of effectiveness which were used to represent organisational culture and to determine an institution's effectiveness. These dimensions are students' educational satisfaction, students' academic development, students' career development, students' personal development, faculty and administrators' employment satisfaction, professional development, the quality of faculty members, system openness and community interaction, the ability to acquire resources and organisational health. The previous dimensions shaped images of organisational culture and impacted effectiveness. Cameron found that an organisation's effectiveness depends on its culture and the way

it has been shaped. He also found that the types of organisational cultures and their strength reflect an institution's effectiveness and validity (Cameron, 1988).

Teaching and Learning

A significant aspect of universities is the quality of teaching and learning that occurs. Models of teaching and learning may have variations in structure and effectiveness depending upon the university. Considering the organisational structure and behaviours associated with teaching and learning as this relates to student outcomes is important.

In a study by Berger (2002a) considering the effects of colleges' organisational structures on student learning, he identified five organisational structures (bureaucratic, systematic, collegial, political and symbolic) in which he characterised the universities and college systems included in his study. He then examined the effects of the colleges' specific organisational structures on students' learning outcomes as measured by students' self-ratings of their perceived academic abilities, changes in knowledge and the development of learning skills. Grade point averages were also considered as an indicator. In order to examine the effects of college organisational structures on students' learning outcomes, Berger (2002a) also considered students' entry characteristics (i.e., gender, race, family income, high school academic achievement and commitment to goals) and their involvement behaviours (i.e., academic effort, time spent studying, social interaction, involvement in activities and off-campus work). Then, he connected these characteristics to the organisational structures of the colleges to understand the degree of correlation of student learning outcomes. Berger concluded that the organisational structures of

colleges and universities influence student learning. The bureaucratic dimension which emphasises campus protocols, written job descriptions, university organisation and strong implementation of rules has no statistically significant effects on students' learning outcomes. However, the collegial dimension has negative effects on students' learning outcomes because the benefits of collegiality favour faculty members' needs more than those of the students.

Other studies have found additional factors impacting students' college experiences. Braxton, Bray and Berger (2000) studied faculty teaching skills and the influence this has on student departure. They considered students' perceptions of faculty teaching skills such as an instructor's organisational ability, preparation and clarity in teaching. Faculty teaching skills affect students' classroom experiences and connect them socially with their institutions. In their study, they found that students whose lecturers were organised in their classroom structures, who were well-prepared for class and who had high levels of instructional skills and clarity were more socially integrated within their institutions and remained more committed to their pursuits of higher education. This was due to students having better understandings of the subject matter, thus reducing the time spent studying and trying to understand their instructor's expectations; as a result, students had more time to spend socialising with their peers. This study concluded that what happens in the classroom is very important and has a strong influence on students' persistence (Braxton et al., 2000).

The general organisational structure of universities can also impact student learning and outcomes. In another study, Berger (2000) considered the connection between colleges' organisational behaviour and student outcomes. Berger's study identified the organisational behaviour of colleges as the mechanism by which

colleges run their systems. His study led to five fundamental organisational structures (i.e., bureaucratic, political, symbolic, systematic and collegial), with each structure articulating a different type of organisational behaviour. In his study, Berger used students' entry characteristics, their levels of exposure to the campus environment and their college academic and non-academic involvement as independent variables. He then moved to classify the organisational behaviour of colleges into the following categories: competitive organisations, which have strong political dimensions; casual organisations, which demonstrate low levels of bureaucratic behaviour; and cohesive organisations, which have low levels of the political and systematic dimensions. On the basis of this empirical study, Berger concluded that there is a connection between college organisational behaviour and student outcomes. More importantly, Berger suggested that students' psychological and behavioural outcomes reflect the type of an organisation and its features. He also suggested that the more an organisation is strongly structured and defined, the more it influences students (Berger, 2000).

Student Involvement, Integration and Persistence

Universities' structural organisations can also influence the degree to which students are involved and integrated within university settings. Organisational elements also impact the degree of student persistence in college. The following section examines several studies considering this relationship between organisational structure and student involvement, integration and persistence.

Berger and Milem (1999) studied the influence of students' behavioural involvement and their perceptions of integration within university settings on their persistence with higher education. In other words, this study combined Tinto's (1994)

model of student integration and its effect on their departure and Astin's (1993b) model of involvement. This study carefully examined the effects of student involvement during the academic year with both faculty members (e.g., conversing with faculty members outside classroom settings) and other students (e.g., participation in study groups, student clubs or organisations, socialisation with friends). Results of this study provided indicators associated with students' decisions of persistence. Besides other factors such as students' backgrounds, findings of the study emphasised positive relationships between students' involvement with their peers and the faculty during the academic year with these elements being important to decisions relating to persistence. They also found that both academic and social integration affect student persistence and positively benefit students' commitment to remaining in college (Berger & Milem, 1999).

Berger and Braxton (1998) studied the effect of colleges and universities as organisations on students' social integration and their departures from these institutions. The structure of their study was built on Tinto's (1994) interaction theory of student departure. They noticed that the majority of past research addressing factors impacting student outcomes concentrated on the effects of student characteristics, students' levels of commitment to obtaining degrees and characteristics of colleges and universities, such as size and selectivity.

Berger and Braxton (1998) looked at this subject from another angle by studying the effects of organisational attributes on students' decisions to withdraw using Tinto's (1994) student interaction theory. They collected data at three points in time: during the beginning of the academic year, during the middle of the fall semester and at the end of the academic year. They also included six sets of variables

in their study: students' background characteristics (i.e., income, high school GPA, gender, race and political view), institution's initial commitment, organisational attributes (i.e., institutional communication, fairness in policy implementation, enforcement of rules, participation in the decision-making process), social integration (i.e., peer relations, faculty relations), institutional commitment and withdrawal decisions. They found that student characteristics and organisational attributes affect students' social integration and their commitment to the institution. This finding emphasises the importance of students' social integration with institutions of higher education, as was explained in Tinto's (1994) model, as well as the importance of the institutions' attributes and efforts to promote the social integration of their students and the effect this has on student persistence (Berger & Braxton, 1998).

Student Experience

Since the research question guiding this thesis focuses on the influence of a university's organisational structure on students' learning experiences, it was essential to understand the possible meanings and different aspects of the term "student experience" and to offer a working definition for this research. This was beneficial as I progressed through the research process and analysed data to determine the nature of students' experiences in the selected university.

In common use, the term "experience" may refer either to a process of learning or to the outcomes of learning. For example, the term "experience" has been claimed to refer to "the accumulation of knowledge or skill that results from direct participation in events or activities" (eLook, n.d.). Experience is described in the Oxford online dictionary as the "practical contact with and observation of facts or

events,” and “an event or occurrence which leaves an impression on someone,” both of which refer to a learning process. Experience is also defined as “the knowledge or skill acquired by a period of practical experience of something, especially that gained in a particular profession” (Oxford University Press, 2011).

Throughout this research, student experience was examined as a process rather than a product. Therefore, I considered factors and experiences which happen to students during their college years rather than looking at experience as the result of what is gained by students at the conclusion of their university studies. This research highlighted factors (i.e., academic, functional and social) that influence this process and impact students during their college years. The focus of this thesis on student experience as a process as opposed to an outcome was due to time and budget limitations. Berger and Milem’s (2000) model was used as the framework for this thesis. I utilised their definition of student experience as well as drew upon their model when examining the relationship between the university’s organisational structures and students’ learning experiences. While Berger and Milem’s model was used as the main framework for this dissertation, it was also useful to consider other definitions and research on student experience.

To understand students’ experiences in higher education, Jones (2010) suggested that students’ experiences are a process that is influenced by many aspects of students’ college years such as their personal expectations, social integration, peer interaction, parents and background, degree programmes, extracurricular activities and career plans after graduation. Jones claimed that as students move through their degree programmes, their own experiences and personal development are influenced and shaped by previous factors. Jones’s (2010) conceptual framework of students’

experiences drew from the work of a wide range of established researchers in the field including Astin (1993b), Tinto (1975); and Eggens, van der Werf and Bosker (2008).

Jones's (2010) definition was adopted within this research. This thesis looked at the experiences of students in their third and fourth years at the university and utilised a framework outlined by Jones (2010) where these experiences were considered as a journey or process. The reason for including students in their third and fourth years was due to the time they had spent at the university and in their programmes. They, therefore, had greater opportunities to establish their own perspectives and opinions regarding their programmes and the university. The following figure explains the factors that shape students' experiences according to Jones (2010).

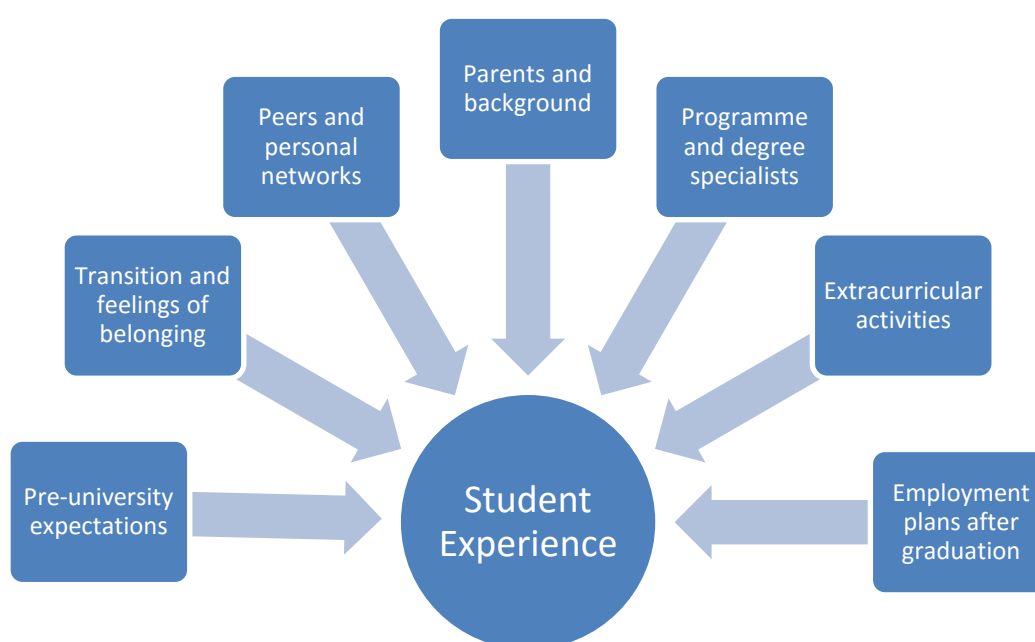


Figure 4.4. Model of student experience (Jones, 2010).

Many writers such as Astin (1993b), Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), Tinto (1994) and Berger and Milem (2000) have used the term “student experience or outcomes” to explain what students experience academically, socially and personally during their college years as well as the positive and negative factors influencing these experiences. This reflects the definition of “experience” in the Oxford online dictionary (Oxford University Press, 2011).

From a general perspective, students’ learning experiences might be described under a larger umbrella which includes the following dimensions:

1. Students’ perceptions of the quality of teaching and the curriculum. For example, this includes the degree to which students understand their instructors and become involved with course materials, the nature of faculty members’ efforts to understand difficulties students might be having with their work, the quality of instruction, the availability of instructors outside of class, opportunities for class discussions and presentations, content and organisation of the curriculum, clarity and context of the courses, the degree to which courses meet students’ expectations and the appropriateness of course assignments and workloads (Astin, 1993b; Selkirk College, 2003).
2. College settings including the structures and quality of the buildings and facilities, the nature of rules and regulations and the size of the college and number of students (Astin, 1993b).
3. Students’ levels of formal and informal contact with faculty members (Astin, 1993b).
4. Students’ levels of involvement with academic (e.g., collaborative learning, tutoring groups) and non-academic activities in the college which reflect

students' social integration and abilities to make friends (Astin, 1993b; Selkirk College, 2003).

5. Students' knowledge, cognitive abilities and intellectual development such as their academic achievement and critical thinking skills (Kara & DeShields, 2004).
6. Students' levels of satisfaction and happiness with the programmes, classes, learning environments and administrative rules and procedures (Astin, 1993b).
7. Students' intentions to continue or withdraw (Kara & DeShields, 2004).

The above factors affect students' academic and social experiences during their college years.

Additionally, Berger and Milem (2000) categorised student experience into three major categories that can be used when examining students' experiences during their college years:

1. *Academic experience*. Cognitive development, attainment of educational objectives, learning in and out of class, grades and programme progress.
2. *Social experience*. Interactions and relationships among students and faculty members.
3. *Functional experience*. Students' levels of interaction with the organisational structure of the college (e.g., dealing with financial aid, tuition and fees, following university rules and regulations, accessibility to campus buildings, cafeteria and food quality).

College experiences potentially influence many aspects of students' lives. Astin (1993b) suggested that students witness psychological and behavioural outcomes during their college years which define and shape their college learning

experiences. Bowen (1997) also claimed that colleges not only affect students, but they also influence society. According to Bowen, universities and institutions of higher education affect society through the changes they help produce in their students who eventually become contributing members of society. Astin (1993b) as well as Bowen (1997) argued that individuals can experience personality changes owing to their college experiences, becoming more liberal, open-minded, curious, adventurous, independent and autonomous with their views and opinions. They may also demonstrate increased self-confidence and wisdom in their judgments. Higher education raises a person's level of knowledge as well as their intellectual abilities which, in turn, influences students' cognitive abilities and increases their tolerance. The degree and nature of change and growth varies between students, but generally change and growth occur at least to some extent. In Bowen's (1997) view, when educated students are received into society, their presence and activities contribute to modifying and shaping the image of society. Their influence on the community often reflects elements of their experience with higher education. Roberts and Styron (2010) suggested that meaningful learning experiences are a key factor in student retention and the production of economically independent, enlightened citizens who assume civic responsibilities. Therefore, they claimed that the role that colleges and universities play in developing and "civilising" society and people is significant.

It is useful for policymakers and university leaders to understand the nature of students' learning experiences during their college years. Students' learning experiences or outcomes can be used as an indicator of an institution's success, teaching quality, strength and effectiveness and can, therefore, be a tool for improving the higher educational system and maximising its benefit. Since this thesis focuses on

a private university, it is essential to understand the nature of students' experiences and opinions in order for the university's structures and functions to best meet students' needs.

In sum, students' learning experiences during their college years can be influenced by the collective efforts of faculty, staff, administrators and other students. Their experiences reflect a combination of many important factors such as their academic achievements, levels of satisfaction and social integration. The empirical studies discussed in this section illustrate an existing relationship between universities' organisational structures and student outcomes. Researchers conducting these studies found that universities' cultures, functionality, environments, structures, methods of teaching and learning, as well as students' perceptions, characteristics and involvement with university activities do indeed affect and influence students' learning experiences and outcomes.

Gender

Since my research focuses on a university for women and explores the relationship between the organisational structure of the selected university and female students' experiences, it was essential to investigate the general issue of gender in higher education. Many writers and researchers have discussed the concept of gender in higher education and have articulated that gender does not just represent students' sexual identity; it reflects many social, personal, emotional, academic and economic aspects of a student's education (Ingleton, 1995; Jacobs, 1996; Leathwood, 2006; Marton & Säljö, 1976; Meyer, 1995; Meyer, Dunne, & Richardson, 1994; Richardson

& King, 1991; Risman, 2004; Severiens & Ten Dam, 1994, 1998; Timmers, Willemsen, & Tijdens, 2010).

The following discussion focuses on differing social expectations, emotional engagement and preferred learning styles that have been claimed to be based on gender. It also considers how gender impacts individuals' experiences before, during and after being at a university. These points were relevant to the female students at the selected research site as assumptions, stereotypes and personal characteristics related to gender can impact university students' experiences and career opportunities (Timmers et al., 2010).

The concept of gender is socially constructed and may vary between cultures. The idea of gender is based on the human sex categories (male and female) which differentiate the functionality, opportunities and actions of individuals on personal, professional and cultural levels. Social expectations are pre-established expectations and roles that societies and cultures embody or enforce for males and females which, in turn, influence the actions of men and women. Therefore, even when men and women have similar job positions or experience like circumstances, they are often influenced by society's assumptions and expectations (Risman, 2004). For example, men may face expectations to be the primary financial supporter in the home, while it may be assumed that women will hold primary responsibility for caring for the children.

Timmers et al. (2010) claimed that for women, emotions such as shame, fear, love, hate, compassion and acceptance can be strongly embodied in their personalities and may interfere with their learning experiences and academic accomplishments. Stereotypes of women being emotional, non-rational and submissive also conflict

with the characteristics that, it is claimed, are required for top job positions (Timmers et al., 2010). On the other hand, it has been suggested that men are less inclined to demonstrate extreme emotion. Emotions can affect students' learning and make a difference in their experiences of higher education such as in the ways emotions influence students' self-esteem and identity (Ingleton, 1995).

Severiens and Ten Dam (1994) argued that gender inequality in choices regarding higher education and careers can be associated with students' learning styles and thought processes. Therefore, it is important for instructors to understand appropriate teaching methods to address the various learning styles of men and women so that students' learning experiences and outcomes can be maximised. For example, female students have been found to benefit from reflective, concrete learning methods, while male students have profited from modes of learning that favour conceptualisation, orientation towards research and objective multiple choice tests (Severiens & Ten Dam, 1994).

Some researchers (Meyer et al., 1994; Severiens & Ten Dam, 1998) argue that considerable differences exist between the learning styles and processes of men and women. For example, female and male students often demonstrate different approaches to learning as it relates to the ways they process knowledge. It has been claimed that male students tend to be more self-centred and focus more on personal development throughout the learning process. They are more likely to be committed to finishing their tasks and degrees, to be more competitive with other students in relation to their academic work, to rely on reasoning and to value debating and solving problems. Meanwhile, it has been suggested that female students tend to be more silent observers and interpret received knowledge as facts prior to shaping their

own perspectives. Female students have been found to be more rational and tend to value other people's opinions. They also enjoy sharing and discussing varied perspectives with other students and teachers (Meyer et al., 1994; Severiens & Ten Dam, 1998).

Research also suggests that although men and women earn similar degrees and qualifications by the conclusion of their college years, they may achieve different outcomes from their fields of study and employment opportunities as well as experience differences in the ways they are treated in the workplace (Jacobs, 1996). For example, both male and female students may earn degrees in business as a result of their university studies. However, the results of their studies may yield different opportunities based upon customs and beliefs common to society. An example in Saudi society is the limitations a woman with a business degree would have such as not being able to own her own business necessitating the need for her to work for someone else. On the contrary, a Saudi man with a business degree may choose to open his own business.

Other researchers have suggested that students' learning styles differ based upon individual preference and personality, claiming that this has nothing to do with gender. For example, Marton and Säljö (1976) identified two basic learning processes that students usually adopt during their educational years. The first is a surface level learning process where students memorise information for the sake of assessments. Students care more about the completion of requirements with little to no intention of approaching learning in an analytical or comprehensive manner or of applying what they learn in their personal lives. The second learning process style is called deep level learning where students focus on the content of the material. Students

implementing deep level learning tend to interact more with knowledge, thus increasing their understanding and ability to apply their learning to their personal and professional lives. Researchers have found these learning processes or approaches to be adapted evenly by both male and female students with no evidence of a significant relationship to gender differences (Richardson & King, 1991).

Some researchers have suggested that women are considered a minority in certain educational fields (e.g., engineering and physics) and that they may face challenges when studying domains that are dominated by males (Meyer, 1995; Meyer et al., 1994). Women have also been shown to be excluded or to have limited participation in certain public, political and governmental activities. This may reflect social assumptions in societies where the main roles of females are thought to be homemakers and childcare providers, relying on men for their financial support. Such masculine social visions are evident in societies worldwide (Leathwood, 2006). In the case of this research which focuses on the Saudi higher education system, Saudi female students have limited access to some educational fields and are restricted from specific educational specialties and training.

Even on a professional level and in career development, women worldwide tend to have fewer opportunities. One example of this is in the higher education sector where there have been examples of unfair treatment for female faculty and administration members in the sense that they are not paid equally and have less power and authority in their positions as compared to their male counterparts. Men constitute the majority of faculty members and administrators in colleges and universities. This may be due to the limited numbers of female Ph.D. recipients, unequal access to fields of study and other social and personal commitments (Jacobs,

1996). Timmers, Willemsen and Tijdens (2010) also suggested that reasons for lower representation of women in job positions in higher education are due to personal, cultural and structural/organisational factors.

In sum, the literature suggests that gender differences exist in higher education and that women often have different learning styles and processes. The literature also points to different educational and career opportunities for men and women based upon their gender. Therefore, if there is an intention to improve the higher educational system to equally benefit both male and female students, it is necessary for educators and leaders in higher education to understand the impact of gender in higher education.

Multicultural Organisations

The multicultural environment that was reported in this research appeared to be a complicated issue that required extensive exploration and analysis. In order to analyse and discuss this issue, it was first essential to identify the general meaning of multicultural organisations or campuses and then move to further exploration of the meaning of the campus's multicultural environment using participants' perspectives.

Multicultural organisations have been identified and discussed by many scholars who provide a wide range of definitions. These definitions vary from simple in nature to more complex. For example, Delgado and Stefancic (2001) simply stated that social institutions reflect many cultures. On the other hand, D'Andrea and Daniels (1991) provided a more complex understanding of multicultural organisations indicating that they not only reflect more than one culture but also increase overall

awareness and knowledge about human diversity which translates into more respectful human interactions and effective interconnections.

Particularly useful to this research in determining the degree of multiculturalism manifest in institutions was Cox's (1991) depiction of multicultural organisations. Cox suggested three types of organisations that were classified based upon the number of cultures that these organisations reflected as well as other features such as domain control, structural and social integration among members and levels of discrimination and prejudice against minority groups. The three organisational types as described by Cox are outlined below:

1. *Monolithic organisation.* A highly homogenous organisation where the majority holds power and controls the organisation. The minority must adapt to the organisational style of the majority.
2. *Plural organisation.* This type of organisation reflects a more heterogeneous membership where people from different cultures and backgrounds (minorities who are different from the dominant group) receive extra attention when it comes to hiring and policies related to promotion. At the same time, this type of organisation fails to achieve cultural integration.
3. *Multicultural organisation.* This type of organisation contains, represents, respects and values many cultural groups. It also reflects full integration of minority members both formally and informally, minimises intergroup conflict and claims the absence of prejudice and discrimination.

Cox's depiction of multicultural organisations facilitated the examination and analysis of data for this research, thus leading to conclusions regarding multiculturalism at PSU.

It is important to understand the meaning of multicultural campuses since this research focused on an institution of higher education. Another reason for understanding the meaning of multicultural campuses is based upon the claim by administrators interviewed for this study indicating that PSU reflects a multicultural campus. According to Cuyjet, Howard-Hamilton and Cooper (2011), the following three factors should be present in order to be considered a multicultural campus: multicultural awareness, multicultural curriculum or knowledge and multicultural skills. These three factors need to be adapted and reflected by people within the institution (Cuyjet et al., 2011). According to Pope, Reynolds and Mueller (2004), multicultural awareness illustrates

1. "A belief that differences are valuable and learning about differences is necessary and rewarding."
2. "Awareness of self and [the] impact it has on others" (p. 271).

Pope, Reynolds and Mueller (2004) defined multicultural knowledge as the following:

1. "Knowledge of diverse cultures and oppressed groups."
2. "Information about how change occurs for individual values and behaviours."
3. "Knowledge about within group differences and understanding of multiple oppressions" (p. 271).

Pope, Reynolds and Mueller (2004) also illustrated that the ability to work with people from diverse cultures is reflected in skills such as the following:

1. "Ability to gain the trust and respect of individuals who are culturally different from themselves."

2. “Capability to emphasise and genuinely connect with individuals who are culturally different from themselves.”
3. “Ability to identify and openly discuss cultural differences and issues” (p.271).

Based upon the previous cited literature, it is apparent that multicultural organisations or campuses not only contain or hire individuals from different cultures and backgrounds but more importantly represent, value, respect and integrate different cultures comprehensively. Respecting differences among cultures and valuing people’s freedom to reveal their personal identities and practice their beliefs and rituals are also considered to be important features of multicultural organisations (Cox, 1991). These definitions were useful when developing a deep meaning of multicultural organisations which guided the examination of the degree of multiculturalism reflected in the studied university.

A Synthesised Model for Understanding the Organisation of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia

The above models and empirical research can be helpful in understanding the Saudi higher education system. As noted earlier, Islam occupies a central place in the Saudi culture as well as in the education system, and it is noticeable in every aspect of the Saudis’ lives. For example, students find places in colleges and universities to pray when it is time for praying with class schedules accommodating for this. Also, undergraduate students are required to take four Islamic courses as a part of their programmes of study.

The influence of Islam on the organisational nature of Saudi higher education has symbolic meaning as evidenced by Islam being one of the basic foundations of the educational system. This reflects some aspects of Birnbaum's (1988) anarchical culture and Bolman and Deal's (2008) symbolic frame. Teaching the rules and regulations of Islam is one of the essential purposes of the Saudi educational system. This symbolic meaning reflects Muslims' shared values, rituals and morals both within Saudi society and in higher education.

At the same time, it is inaccurate to describe the organisational nature of the Saudi higher education system with only one model. Although it is true that the Saudi organisational nature has a symbolic religious face, mechanisms of the system are bureaucratic. Every person within Saudi organisations has duties and obligations that must be fulfilled. In addition, formal relationships exist between leaders and followers with authority generally residing in the tops of organisations. Bureaucratic features of the Saudi higher educational system highlight important aspects of Bergquist's (1992) managerial culture, Birnbaum's (1988) and Morgan's (2006) bureaucratic organisations and Bolman and Deal's (2008) structural frame.

Reasons for this bureaucratic system come from the culture itself. According to Hofstede and Hofstede (2005), Saudi culture can be defined as a large power-distance culture, where children are raised to obey, respect and agree with parents and their elders at all times and in all situations. This notion is also present in the educational context. For example, students always listen to their teachers' instructions following them with little or no questioning. At the professional level, unequal relationships between superiors and subordinates ensure that subordinates silently take orders from superiors and follow their instructions without complaint.

This type of organisational structure creates centralised power among a few people while the rest become passive, quiet followers. There will always be bosses or superiors who give orders that must be obeyed and instructions that should be followed. Naturally, people with power fight to control situations and to protect their own personal interests; these people find it difficult to relinquish power or share it with others. Thus, children are raised in homes and schools based on bureaucratic-like systems from the beginning of their lives (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005).

A careful analysis of the nature of the Saudi higher education system or the ways in which colleges and universities operate in Saudi Arabia reveals conflicting elements within the system. Although the Saudi higher education system is based on Islamic administrative models which emphasise consultation and the sharing of opinions in theory, universities' administrative practices reflect differences in their approaches. The hierarchy and bureaucracy associated with decision-making processes limit consultation and force systems to operate as machines.

Collegiality among departmental members is very limited and has a minor role in the decision-making process. Professors and administrators within departments usually meet once or twice a month to discuss academic affairs, new curriculum and their interests in expanding or hiring new faculty. These official meetings are recorded, and recommendations are submitted to the university board. These kinds of meetings produce some changes within the department but do not have significant impacts on the decision-making process at the university level. Meanwhile, such meetings reflect shared visions and values among department members, thus creating a sense of collaboration among members.

Further, each department has a lounge area where faculty members, administrators and staff meet informally on a daily basis, have a cup of coffee or tea and discuss their daily routines or things facing them during their workday. Such activities emphasise a friendly environment among department members and create a sense of community.

The effects of external changes from society on university systems in Saudi Arabia are noticeable. Even though changes and responses to the environment are often slow in realisation, they reflect the main elements of a systematic model. Saudi Arabia experiences economic, political and ideological changes, and there is pressure on the education system in general to adapt to those changes. For example, religious curricula were re-evaluated, and changes were made after the event of September 11, 2001, as a way of investigating and participating in the war on terrorism. A new programme to privatise the mathematics and science curricula is also in place illustrating a shift to rely on the private sector to do work that used to be done solely by the government.

The development of women's roles in Saudi society such as through their increasing involvement on committees and participation in conferences has required changes to accommodate for this development. As a response to development, universities have opened new colleges and provided expanded programmes such as law and interior design for female students. They have also increased the number of scholarships for women, thus giving Saudi women the chance to earn degrees from foreign countries benefitting themselves as well as Saudi society.

The organisational nature of Saudi higher education embodies varying elements from multiple organisational models. Therefore, it is impossible to find one

organisational model that describes or fits the nature of the Saudi higher education system. As a result, the Saudi higher education organisational system is a combination of the bureaucratic, political, collegial, systematic and Islamic/symbolic models.

In sum, the development of this synthesised model for understanding the organisational nature of Saudi higher education institutions provided a basic foundation for the work in this thesis which examined the impact of a private Saudi university's organisational structure on student outcomes.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview and analysis of literature on universities' organisational behaviours and structures and addressed how these behaviours influence student outcomes. This chapter illustrated the most common organisational structures that have been used in institutions of higher education highlighting both strengths and weaknesses of these structures. This chapter also linked these organisational structures and models to empirical research illustrating the influence of universities' organisational behaviours and structures on student outcomes.

Details and criticisms of these models and empirical studies provided a framework for analysing the structure, systems and culture of the Saudi Arabian private university selected for inclusion in this study. This chapter also discussed literature that illustrates important issues that are linked to this research such as students' experiences, gender and multiculturalism. This literature review also provided a foundation for developing a synthesised model that was used to examine the impact of the studied university's structure on its students' outcomes.

The following chapter discusses the methodology that was used to conduct this research. It also discusses the best approaches for addressing the research question.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Question

How and in what ways does college organisational behaviour and culture influence students' learning experiences through their college years in a women's Saudi Arabian private university?

Research Approach

Since this research examined a Saudi women's campus, it was important to understand the history, social influences, economic purposes and core values of Saudi Arabian universities and the general effects of globalisation on higher education. These topics were covered earlier in chapters 2 and 3. Also, chapter 4 provided a detailed description of literature that discussed different organisational structures of universities and how this connects with students' college experiences. This research sought to better understand the organisational structure of a private university for women and how the university's organisational behaviours impact students' learning outcomes. In order to answer this research question, consideration was given to the official policies of the case study institution, mechanisms of the organisational operating systems at the university and decision-making processes. These data were used to support an exploration of the effects on students' learning experiences. Document analysis, face-to-face interactions, interviews with employees and students at the institution and observations were needed in order to address the research question. An open research stance was adopted while investigating the institution's

organisational culture. This approach reduced researcher bias which might have otherwise influenced the research results (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009).

Qualitative research was defined by Merriam (1998) as “an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that helps us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible” (p. 5). Therefore, qualitative research should be conducted with no previous hypotheses or analytical assumptions and without the intent of controlling any events (Tight, 2003). Tight (2003) expanded upon the definition of qualitative research describing it as a tool for exploring specific events or phenomena in depth through the use of participants’ lived experiences and views.

Qualitative research has also been found to be useful for researchers who are interested in studying the quality of relationships, activities or situations. Qualitative research provides a holistic description of research subjects which offers detailed, “thick” descriptions, processes for in-depth inquiry and rich data obtained through people’s personal perspectives and experiences. Such detailed, in-depth descriptions provide researchers and intended audiences of the research with a greater understanding of the research problem and study results (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

A qualitative paradigm utilising a case study approach was the most suitable means for answering this study’s research question of how the organisational structure of the selected university related to student outcomes. Identification of relationships within the university and how these relationships shape the culture of the organisation were examined. This task required direct contact with the university’s staff and students as well as intense observations of daily activities at the university.

According to Merriam (1998), there are three philosophical, qualitative research orientations that usually lead researchers to their specific research focus. These qualitative research orientations could be briefly described as follows:

1. *Positivist-qualitative form*. Education, for example, is considered to be the object or the phenomenon to be studied. Knowledge obtained through the study is objective and reality is stable, observed and measured.
2. *Interpretive-qualitative form*. Emphasis is placed on research processes and learning experiences, thus ensuring that the experiences of the research subjects are adequately examined and understood. Research results and findings from this form are gained inductively during an on-going research process.
3. *Critical-qualitative form*. This focuses on the critical examination and analysis of research subjects.

This study utilised an interpretive-qualitative orientation. This provided an appropriate framework for this research since the study necessitated a substantial understanding of students', lecturers' and administrators' experiences at the selected university. Personal and direct involvement with students and staff were required to achieve this in-depth understanding.

The Qualitative Researcher

Rossman and Rallis (2003) suggested that qualitative research requires researchers to be emotionally, personally, ethically and politically sensitive when conducting studies. These sensitivities are considered to be key elements of qualitative research, which is not necessarily manifest in quantitative research. As this

study involved human beings, it was critical to consider the emotions, opinions, beliefs and values of both the participants and the researcher. Researchers should prepare themselves for sensitivity in research settings, minimise personal agendas and maintain an awareness of ethical behaviour and research practices.

Merriam (1998) listed characteristics and skills that qualitative researchers need in order to increase their success. These included tolerance for ambiguity, the flexibility to deal with sudden changes and an ability to work with unclear research protocols and structures. Qualitative researchers should also be sensitive to research contexts, participants' backgrounds and to physical research settings. Moreover, qualitative researchers must have good communication skills including speaking, listening to participants, formulating and asking effective questions and documenting what they hear and learn in the form of written materials (Merriam, 1998).

Examination of the structure, culture and relationships of the private university in this study was undertaken using the organisational frameworks previously discussed in chapter 4. Throughout the process of conducting this research and analysing the results in light of these frameworks, the researcher not only sought to answer the research question, but also strove to learn, explore and develop knowledge. This is, as suggested by Rossman and Rallis (2003), part of the research process where learning occurs for the researcher as well. Qualitative researchers seek answers to their questions from real life experiences, real people and real events. They undertake research in natural settings without attempting to control the situation (naturalistic inquiry). Qualitative researchers observe what they hear, see and read and then build their findings according to the gathered information.

Qualitative researchers should be open to the idea of ambiguity, be flexible with their methods and have the ability to change or reshape their research questions as needed. Throughout the research process, researchers increase understanding of their research topics and build upon existing knowledge. Rossman and Rallis (2003) indicated that this process of discovery in qualitative research helps it to “come alive.”

In sum, qualitative researchers experience an active learning process in which they gather information, engage with participants, analyse data, reflect, make sense of their perceptions, build their own understandings and experience the development of personal skills.

Naturalistic Inquiry

In order to answer my research question, an understanding of the university’s organisational structure and behaviour and how this impacts students’ learning experiences was necessary. To obtain this understanding, I, as the researcher, was an observer and utilised my fieldwork and interview notes to reach my conclusions. I attempted to put aside any assumptions or expectations that I previously held related to the research. To the maximum extent possible, I aimed to have an open mind regarding the institution’s culture and structure which allowed me to explore relationships and organisational structures as they existed without personal interference or manipulation. Therefore, my research could be placed within the field of naturalistic inquiry which was defined by Patton (1990) as “studying real-world situations as they unfold naturally; [being] non-manipulative, unobtrusive, and non-controlling; [having an] openness to whatever emerges – [with a] lack of

predetermined constraints on outcomes” (pp. 40-41). Patton considered naturalistic inquiry to be a major characteristic of qualitative research.

Denzin (1971) categorised naturalistic inquiry as a social research method that aims for valuable social theory. This research method provides a framework for studying real events and natural behaviour by actively entering into participants’ worlds and by understanding their language (both spoken and physical), attitudes, behaviours, values and feelings. This process is one of social involvement where the researcher engages with research participants in an in-depth manner. Since part of my research sought to understand the nature of relationships between various research participants (e.g., student/faculty relationships and the effect this has on students’ learning outcomes), this approach was particularly relevant.

Denzin (1971) believed that naturalistic behaviourism, or one’s attitude or way of thinking, provides a rich ethnographic description that is collected and analysed with the help and support of native people or participants. This means that researchers reflect on participants’ language, thoughts and experiences followed by analysis with the aid of a native person so the researcher ensures validity of the collected data. Native participants are considered to be coaches in the analytical process and are described as natural resources that can verify theories and evaluate findings because they better understand their lived experiences as opposed to outside researchers. This, in turn, leads to data triangulation which adds strength to the study’s findings.

Hatch (1985) classified naturalistic inquiry as a qualitative research approach which can be distinguished from experimental inquiry and is a way of observing social phenomena and interpreting human interaction. Data obtained through

naturalistic inquiry is collected by observation and/or reviewing documents which was done in this research during the data collection period.

A naturalistic approach to data collection and analysis was relevant to this research. As I observed students and faculty at the university, I came to a better understanding of the forces that affected the nature of the university's organisational culture, the relationships within the university and the impact of the organisation on students' learning experiences.

Common Characteristics of Qualitative Research Relevant to This Study

There are general characteristics of qualitative research methods which are common among various models and approaches. Fraenkel and Wallen (2003), Merriam (1998) and Patton (1990) identified some features of qualitative research as the most common characteristics which distinguish qualitative research from other types of research. The following points highlight the main characteristics of qualitative research that were illustrated in this research:

1. *Nature of knowledge.* One of the most important characteristics of qualitative research is that it is conducted in a natural setting. This means that data are collected from a natural and direct source (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Patton (1990) also suggested that naturalistic inquiry is considered to be one of the most important attributes of qualitative research meaning that the researcher deals with real life situations and is open to whatever findings that may emerge during the research process. Conducting my research in a naturalistic setting provided a better understanding of the organisational structure of the

university selected for study. As the researcher, I entered into the university and attempted to avoid manipulation and interference within the environment.

2. *Process of the research.*

- a. Qualitative research focuses on the processes of searching, understanding and reaching knowledge. As a result of these processes, richly descriptive material is obtained (Merriam, 1998). Researchers should adopt the principle of “emergent design flexibility” (Patton, 1990, p. 43) meaning that they should be prepared for any changes that may happen during the research process and have the ability to adapt with appropriate changes and continue with the research.
- b. Qualitative research emphasises the importance of the research process as well as the product. Therefore, the research process can be just as beneficial to the researcher as are the results of a study. For example, designing the study and collecting and analysing the data can be a valuable learning experience for the researcher (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

3. *Data collection.* Data in qualitative research tends to be collected directly from research participants and relies upon their words and actions rather than numbers. This characteristic can be seen clearly when researchers undertake interviews, videotaping, observations and field notes (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Qualitative research attempts to understand events and phenomena from participants’ points of view rather than through researchers’ perspectives or opinions (Merriam, 1998). As the researcher, I was involved with my research participants through observations of their daily activities within the

university. Through this type of involvement, I was able to observe aspects of the university's organisational culture and the nature of relationships between research participants which reflected their needs, satisfactions and demands.

4. *Role of the researcher.*

- a. Qualitative research uses the researcher as the primary data collector and instrument of analysis. This means that the research instrument is a human being who adapts techniques as needed, reacts to changes and responds to difficulties that occur during the research process (Merriam, 1998).
- b. Qualitative research requires physical involvement from the researcher as well as participants and usually involves fieldwork (Merriam, 1998).
- c. I was the data collector and analyser of data for this study. Therefore, my notes and memos were critical to the data collection and analysis processes as they reflected my observations and conclusions regarding the university setting.

5. *Analysis of the data.* Data in qualitative research tend to be analysed inductively. This means that there are no previous hypotheses or assumptions associated with the research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Qualitative research inductively uses data to build a theory addressing the research question (Merriam, 1998). As I sought to understand the organisational structure of the selected university, I built upon the data and information gathered throughout the research process so that by the conclusion of the research process, I had an understanding of the university's organisational structure and was able to apply this structure to the organisational models previously discussed.

This research can be described as qualitative research which used naturalistic inquiry as the main approach to data collection. Attention was given to participants' words and actions. I exercised flexibility in response to changes that occurred during the research process such as participants' refusals to have their interviews recorded, participants' brief answers that may have limited information and conflicting meeting schedules among participants. I was also sensitive to the research setting and participants' emotions and behaviours (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Methodological Approach

Choosing the most appropriate research methodology and methods for this study from among those used to explore higher education was challenging. Different approaches lead to the generation of different types of knowledge as each comes with its own language, foci and preferred methods of data collection and analysis.

Before elaborating on the research methodology that was used in this study, it is important to consider differences between the following terms: research methods and methodology. Research methods refer to the various behaviours, procedures, schemes and instruments that are selected and constructed for use during data collection (Kothari, 2004). Research methods are usually concerned with the ways and techniques that are used for data collection such as interviews, observations and questionnaires (Tight, 2003).

On the other hand, methodology explains the composite of methods by which research proceeds. Methodology refers to the whole research approach or philosophy including the entire research process (Tight, 2003). Research methodology deals with the ways research problems are identified; the manner in which research hypotheses

are formulated; the kinds of data collection, tools and methods used to collect data; and analysis processes and techniques. Research methodology provides a wider vision of research, while research methods are very specific (Kothari, 2004).

In order to answer this study's research question, a methodological approach was selected based upon its ability to help me deepen my understanding of the organisational structure of the university and relationships among the university's members. This required me to view the organisational structure of the selected university as a phenomenon and necessitated the examination of policies, practices and structural features of the university. The case study methodology discussed by Tight (2003) was deemed to be the most appropriate methodological approach for this research.

Data were collected for the purpose of understanding organisational actions and mechanisms within the university. This allowed me to classify elements of the university's organisational structure and to offer recommendations from an organisational and cultural perspective in relation to these classifications. Consideration of the levels of student satisfaction with their college experiences were addressed by looking at connections between the organisational structure and administrative culture and analysing how these influence students' learning experiences. To achieve this goal, I examined the perceptions of students and faculty members in regard to their college experiences by interviewing and asking them about the university's structural features, culture, regulations and policies. This approach was identified by Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) and Imel, Kerka and Wonacott (2002) as phenomenology.

Generally, case studies are considered to be the most appropriate research methodology to examine the organisational practices and policies of higher education. Therefore, a case study approach was the most suitable methodology to answer my research question and was the generalised methodology for this research. The following section identifies reasons supporting this methodological choice.

Case Study

Case studies are generally used as a social research method. This approach has been increasingly utilised in higher educational research and is considered to be beneficial in examining specific practices or new policies in organisations and institutions (Tight, 2003). Case studies provide the opportunity to focus on understanding a case in depth and are considered to be a research framework utilising multiple methods of data collection (Simons, 2009).

In order to understand why a case study approach was most appropriate to this research, it is beneficial to understand what case studies enable or achieve. Case studies are a qualitative research strategy. Yin (2009) suggested the following definition: “A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 18).

Simons’ (2009) definition provides further elaboration upon this concept:

“Case study is an in-depth exploration and forms multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in a real life context. It is research-based and inclusive of different methods. It is evidence-led. The primary purpose is to generate in-depth

understanding of a specific topic, program, policy, institution or system to generate knowledge and/or inform policy development, professional practice and civil or community action” (p. 25).

Simon’s (2009) identification of a case study provides a description of my research intent.

The main purpose of my research was to understand the organisational structure of the university and to connect it with students’ learning experiences. Gaining an understanding of the institution’s organisational culture and structure required close examination of the institution’s policies, documents and employees which, in turn, helped me understand the organisational culture of the university.

Not only did my research seek to understand the university’s organisational culture by providing details and analysis about the university’s policies and structures as Merriam (1998) suggested, but it also considered how the university achieved this. Answering this question of “how” was addressable through a case study approach (Yin, 2009).

Generally, case studies help provide understandings of real life phenomena and allow researchers to gain a sense of complex organisational cycles and processes (Merriam, 1998). Case studies explore the particularity and uniqueness of a single case (Simons, 2009). Research based upon case studies also seeks to understand large, complex life events and provides in-depth descriptions of such events. Case studies have been found to be one of the most suitable research strategies when studying the dynamics of organisations and exploring their in-depth working processes (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Merriam (1998) also suggested that case studies have been

recognised as one of the most appropriate research methods to be used in the educational field.

Natures and Types of Case Studies

According to Freebody (2003), the nature of case studies depends on educators' and researchers' observations and insights. When methods for data collection and analysis are identified before the start of the research study, then the purpose of the case study is exploratory. However, if the case study explains situations or phenomena which lead toward the formulation of a theory or if it tests an existing theory, then the purpose of the case study is explanatory. Finally, if the case study requires a detailed description of a theory at the beginning of the study, then the purpose of this type of case study is descriptive (Simons, 2009). The nature of my research was exploratory. I was the primary data collector and worked towards understanding the organisational nature of the selected university finding out how it influenced students' learning experiences (Freebody, 2003).

In order to conduct successful case study research and select appropriate data collection methods and analytical tools, it is important to know the different types or approaches to case study research which can lead the researcher in different directions (Simons, 2009). Stake (2005) distinguished three types of case studies: intrinsic, instrumental and multiple/collective.

Intrinsic case studies primarily focus on a particular case being studied and care less about gathering theory. Intrinsic case studies emphasise the case itself more than the findings (Stake, 2005). Since the primary goal of my research was to explore and understand the university's organisational culture and to connect it with students'

learning experiences and because I had no previous expectations or intentions to build a more generalisable theory from my findings, my research could be viewed as an intrinsic case study.

The second type of case study identified by Stake (2005) is the instrumental case study. This type of case study deals with the examination of a particular case that seeks to generalise results or build theory. Instrumental case studies focus primarily on activities, facilities and structures of the case more than the case itself. The goal of this research was to deeply understand the structure of the selected university and to study the influence of its organisational behaviour on students' learning experiences with no attention of generalising results.

The third type of case study outlined by Stake (2005) is multiple or collective case studies which use more than one case to investigate a phenomenon. Collective case studies are an instrumental case study that combines a number of cases to study a situation, thus leading to generalisations. Since I only dealt with one case and was not seeking to generalise my research results, this type of case study was not applicable to my research.

Merriam (1998) identified case studies based upon their overall intention or purpose. If the case under study provides details and information, then it is considered to be a *descriptive* case study. If the case under study tries to develop, support or challenge a theoretical aspect and already has prior assumptions, then it is an *interpretive* case study. If the case under study tends to make judgments or explanations of certain phenomena or a theory, then it is considered to be an *evaluative* case study.

Merriam's (1998) classification of case studies based upon the overall research goal is more appropriate and provides greater distinction between different types of case studies than the disciplinary case study typology. In relation to my research, it was easier to identify the case study approach as descriptive under Merriam's classification of case studies and more difficult to categorise it according to academic discipline. I thought that it could be a sociological case study since I was studying people's actions and behaviours within the organisation. I also thought my case study would have an ethnographic feature since it examined the cultural nature of the organisation. Moreover, it seemed as though the historical case study could be relevant as I consulted official documents and policies of the university.

The following summarises the rationale for selecting the case study approach that was used for this research:

1. The research sought to obtain an in-depth understanding of a "real life" organisation. A case study approach was the most appropriate strategy for such examination.
2. The research question addressed "how" the university was organised, affected students and dealt with operational cycles. Therefore, it was explanatory in nature (Yin, 2009).
3. The research sought to understand the processes and mechanisms of the institution. A case study was the most suitable strategy for such research.
4. The research studied a single, contemporary event and looked at the effects of the organisational structure on students' learning experiences within the chosen campus.

5. The researcher did not control or manipulate behaviours. Rather, she described and explored the situation which drove findings from fieldwork reflections.

Strengths and Limitations of a Case Study Methodological Approach

As with any other research methodology, case studies have strengths and limitations. Case studies emphasise the idea of researchers being physically and mentally involved with the research which is considered to be a strength. Case studies require fieldwork such as observations, interviews and direct contact with participants and are reflective of natural situations or phenomena. Such real life involvement enables a deep examination and understanding of the case, thus providing the researcher with a rich background of the case so he/she can undertake rational analyses and build reasonable arguments and/or recommendations. At the same time, being fully involved both physically and mentally places significant burdens on the researcher and is considered to be an exhausting process.

Since case studies produce “thick,” holistic descriptions of cases, this requires significant amounts of time and money to support the research process. This may not be feasible for many researchers. Also, a researcher’s sensitivity to the research topic, to participants and to research settings needs to be based on training for properly conducting this type of research, dealing with conflict and maintaining sensitivity when working with participants, analysing data and in putting personal preferences and agendas aside (Merriam, 1998).

Rightly, ethical issues are of great concern when it comes to case study research. The researcher in a case study is a human being. Therefore, research processes and results should not be influenced by a researcher’s personal beliefs,

values, expectations or personal judgments. Researchers should demonstrate high ethical standards and not allow personal agendas to interfere with the research process (Simons, 2009).

Other major limitations of case study research include the validity and reliability of generalisations. Many believe that since case study research focuses on one case and its special circumstances, then it is difficult to generalise conclusions and recommendations to other cases with different characteristics, environments and circumstances. As a result, theory building is assumed to be difficult, if not impossible. However, Yin (2009) believed that case studies can produce results with detailed descriptions that can also be used with other cases that share similar settings or circumstances. It might also be considered a limitation that policymaking is not the goal of case study research; instead, case studies aim to understand particular situations in greater depth providing some suggestions and recommendations (Simons, 2009).

My research considered one campus of a private university that had its own culture, systems, practices, circumstances and demographics which could be similar or different from other institutions. It is not reliable or reasonable to apply recommendations that were reached in this study to other institutions of higher education unless they are similar to the case study university in this research, which is highly improbable. This limitation was addressed by shifting the study's purpose away from generalisation of results to deeply understanding the context of the university and providing rich, descriptive details about the research process so readers could identify similar points between this case study university and other institutions.

Despite the limitations of case study research, it remains one of the most useable and dependable methodologies in higher education research.

Ethnographic Research

What is Ethnographic Research?

This research also incorporated some features of ethnographic research. Ethnographic research is a methodological approach to qualitative research and is considered to be complex in nature. It requires researchers to obtain a holistic picture of studied cases or events and emphasises the comprehensive documentation of all collected data and information gathered during the research process (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

Ethnographic research reveals people's beliefs, values guiding their actions, their understanding of those actions as well as the ways in which other individuals and groups affect the actions of those around them (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Ethnographers seek to illustrate and analyse cultural aspects of selected cases through researching participants' practices and beliefs (Gay & Airasian, 2003). Ethnographic research has been found to be useful and effective in better understanding educational settings (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). This type of research has roots in cultural anthropology and sociology and focuses on small-scale societies, cultures or cases (Goulding, 2005). Ethnographies also aim to investigate beyond what research participants say or represent about themselves in order to understand shared systems and cultures (Goulding, 2005). LeCompte and Schensule (2010) suggested that the main purpose of ethnographies is to understand social and cultural problems or

phenomena within researched organisations or institutions in order to develop and suggest approaches which could improve situations or solve problems.

Features and Characteristics of Ethnographic Research

The key feature of ethnographic research is intense and direct contact with research participants within their natural settings and includes clear documentation of observations during fieldwork. Data collection and documentation of data are considered to be critical steps in this type of research process (Goulding, 2005).

Many writers such as LeCompte and Schensule (2010), Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) as well as Walford (2007) identified basic characteristics that distinguish ethnographic research from other types of research and highlighted a number of concepts that direct the work of ethnographers. These can be summarised as follows:

1. Research is conducted in a natural setting and not in a laboratory;
2. Face-to-face interactions with research participants are used, emphasising full involvement with research materials and participants;
3. Research provides accurate reflections of research participants' opinions and behaviours;
4. The use of multiple data sources as well as qualitative and quantitative methods is supported, such as the researcher's own field notes, audio and video recordings, written documents, surveys and questionnaires;
5. The concept of culture focuses on behaviours, ideas and the beliefs of particular groups of people and reflects these from the perspectives of those being researched. The concept of culture is used as a key to interpreting results;

6. The holistic perspective emphasises the description of those things the ethnographer can see, hear or read;
7. Contextualisation of the data allows the researcher to transform observations into a bigger perspective;
8. Thick descriptions usually appear during final reports of the research and include details of observations and interviews; and
9. Non-judgmental orientations emphasise the importance of researchers isolating their own judgments and personal opinions to reduce biases and preconceived ideas.

Ethnographic Research Process

Ethnographic research processes encompass the following three stages: (a) in-depth, detailed descriptions of selected cases; (b) analysis of data; and (c) finding emerging meanings in the research without necessarily attempting to generalise results or build theory (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

Data collection in ethnographic research is usually based on observations and interviewing methods which take place in natural settings to reflect original cases as they normally exist without predetermined judgments or environmental controls (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Ethnographers' ears and eyes are the main tools used during data collection. Ethnographic researchers must build trusting relationships with their research settings and participants in order to get the most truthful results (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). Ethnographic researchers rarely initiate their research with hypotheses or predictions; instead, their aim is to deeply understand the selected research setting or event and to develop findings from their observations and the

interview process. As a result of their observations and interviews, ethnographers tend to provide field notes that reveal the quality of their research and lead to research reports (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

Observation is considered to be an essential element of the ethnographic research process and provides a starting point for the research. It also familiarises researchers with participants and provides opportunities to build strong foundations for formulating and describing research topics. Observation also helps researchers formulate and structure subsequent interviews and leads to identification of the kinds of interviews that could potentially suit the research in a more appropriate manner (Winget, 2005).

Field notes are also an essential component of ethnographic research. They should be descriptive; represent a variety of information from different perspectives; cross-validate and triangulate data through the gathering of different kinds of information (e.g., observations, interviews, programme documentation, recordings and photographs); use quotations which represent participants' experiences as described in their own words and raise the researcher's awareness and sensitivity to the different stages of fieldwork (Genzuck, 2003).

Strengths and Weaknesses of Ethnographic Research

Ethnographic research, like any other research methodology, has its strengths and weaknesses. One of the strengths of ethnographic research is that it attempts to understand research participants' behaviours, cultures and experiences in natural research settings with limited interference by the researcher. It also provides comprehensive descriptions and perspectives which lead to deeper understandings of

the cases. Ethnographic research has been found to be an appropriate methodology for studying behaviour (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

On the other hand, weaknesses of ethnographic research include a primary dependence on researchers' interviews, observations and interpretations which may affect the validity of the research. The rare use of numerical data and lack of control in field settings are also considered to be weaknesses that impact the reliability of the research. Ethnographers rarely provide readers with access to their field notes which leads to ambiguity in regard to research processes and adversely affects a study's reliability (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

In sum, ethnographic research could be a suitable methodological approach in the educational field when researchers seek to deeply understand and become more aware of particular cases such as organisational structures of schools or colleges. The specific application of an ethnographic approach to this research study is discussed at the conclusion of this chapter.

The Researcher as the Research Tool

There is significant controversy regarding the qualitative researcher's position and his or her influence on the research process and research participants. It has been claimed that qualitative researchers, especially in fields of social science, ethnography and anthropology, cannot treat their research as laboratory experiments isolating themselves from their research participants (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

The feature of qualitative research related to naturalistic inquiry which indicates that there is no control of the research setting and participants raises some questions about the researcher's role in setting questions and interviews with

participants. In qualitative research, the researcher fully participates in the research process including data collection which may involve interviewing and observing participants. Questions asked in interviews with participants and in other conversations are predetermined and controlled by the researcher. The researcher, if not cognisant of remaining neutral, may influence participants' answers, thus introducing biases and favoured conclusions (Holloway & Biley, 2011).

In qualitative research, and especially in ethnographic studies, the data collection process mainly depends on the researcher who is the primary collector of data. Data from interviews, observations and field notes are collected and recorded by the researcher. The researcher observes and records information from the research setting including participants' actions and attitudes, thus highlighting the deep involvement of the researcher and the impossibility for ethnographic qualitative researchers to isolate themselves, their background and their personal experiences from the research process (Holloway & Biley, 2011). Ethnographic qualitative researchers reflect a strong connection between researchers and their research data, meaning that ethnographic qualitative research reflects what the researcher sees, hears and records. These are subjective processes which may vary among researchers. As a result, data might be influenced by researchers and may not fully represent its naturalistic features.

Reflexivity is a key factor in qualitative research. Finlay (2002) defined reflexivity in qualitative research as continual and thoughtful evaluation of the research process and participants' responses. Reflexivity illustrates how knowledge is enhanced through high levels of critical thinking as well as active interpretations between a researcher's experiences and the data collected. Reflexivity is strongly

connected to ethnographic research and represents the researcher's on-going, dynamic and subjective self-awareness (Dowling, 2006).

In qualitative research, the researcher's personality, knowledge and background influence the entire research process. For example, this influence is seen in the beginning stages of the research where the researcher selects the research questions and research setting. Characteristics of the researcher also influence the data collection process, data analysis and conclusions of the study. This reflects the researcher's deep involvement and attachment to the ideas and research process. Therefore, the researcher cannot be treated as an outsider to the research process. On the contrary, the researcher is an insider to the research process as there is some degree of personal influence on the research. For example, the personality of the researcher as well as his or her perspective and goals influence the research process to varying degrees whether directly or indirectly (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

Although researchers try to remain ethical and objective, it is essential to understand that outcomes from their research are influenced to some degree by their personalities, experiences and backgrounds. Therefore, outcomes from research not only include such things as scholarly publications, but more importantly represent increased self-awareness, self-development and an on-going learning process (Ekins & Stone, 2012).

Synthesis of the Ethnographic Research Approach and My Thesis Research

This research sought to better understand the organisational structure and culture of the selected women's private university and how it influences students' learning experiences. Therefore, document analysis, face-to-face interactions,

observations and interviews with employees and students at the institution were needed in order to address the research question. This process highlighted multiple sources for data collection that are considered a feature of ethnographic research. The cultural concept of the ethnographic approach was apparent during interviews with a select number of faculty members, a focus group of third and fourth-year college students as well as classroom observations which revealed some of the research participants' behaviours, ideas and beliefs. The research took place in a natural setting with no personal interference or manipulation of the setting by the researcher. This reflected one of the most important features of the ethnographic approach. Research results revealed a thick description of the case, with no intention to make judgments or to evaluate the case.

Strengths of using an ethnographic approach for this study were that it provided a holistic description of the selected university's organisational structure as well as students' experiences. This research sought to understand the processes and mechanisms of a private women's university with no intention of controlling or manipulating the behaviours of university faculty members and students; rather, it explored the university's organisational structure and behaviours with findings being driven from fieldwork reflections and collected data. This methodological approach yielded neutrality and transparency in the research.

Meanwhile, since this thesis focused on a single case, it was difficult and unreasonable to draw recommendations that could be generalised to other institutions of higher education. This reflects a limitation of this study. This limitation was addressed by shifting the study's purpose away from generalisation to deeply understanding the context of the university and providing rich, descriptive details

about the research process so that readers could identify similar points between this case study and other institutions of higher education.

Another potential challenge of this research was associated with sampling students and faculty members as well as assessing the organisational processes of the university's natural environment. Some students and faculty members were uncooperative with the research process such as the interview schedule and nature of the research. University administration limited their transparency and was unsupportive when asked to provide official documents. To solve these challenges, the researcher was flexible with the interview schedule and partnered with participants as much as possible. The researcher also ensured that interview questions were simple and understandable in order to minimise efforts required by participants. The researcher also made the data collection process as quick and efficient as possible so that there were no disruptions to the university's system.

This study provided an opportunity for me to develop and enhance my qualitative research skills and allowed me to connect theory and existing research about universities' organisational cultures and behaviours with students' learning experiences and satisfaction. This task was a personal learning process which enriched my knowledge of universities' organisational structures and behaviours and provided me with opportunities to draw closer to administrators and faculty members and to learn from their management skills and experience. More importantly, this research placed me in a position where I could connect personally with students, listen to their needs and understand their desires. It also increased my understanding of the duties of academic staff and administrators and students' expectations. This learning

process was an enriching experience which will influence my professional life and future career.

It is also important to outline my position and relationship to the research I conducted. My research took place on a private university campus for women. As a Saudi woman with an undergraduate degree from a Saudi university, I more personally related to this research. Also, being a Saudi scholar connected me to the culture of the research setting and increased my ability to understand the social and Islamic values that distinguish Saudi cultures from others, the political agendas of the Saudi higher education system, the feminine roles in Saudi higher education and the challenges facing Saudi female students and scholars (see chapters 2 and 3 for discussions of these topics). These features made me an insider (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009) to my research, where my understanding of the culture and behaviour of the participants and research site enhanced my involvement both personally and professionally. On the contrary, being a researcher from a western university and not being a staff member or student at the research site situated me as an outsider, which could have potentially limited my understanding of university functions and student satisfaction.

This highlights both a strength and potential weakness of this research. My Saudi background was an asset to this thesis as it enhanced my ability to understand participants' feelings related to certain issues as expressed through their body language and enabled me to comprehend the influence of Saudi culture and values. This reflected positively on data analysis and facilitated interpretation of the data. On the other hand, my being an outsider to the research site may have impacted participants' full disclosure during the interviews in attempts to maintain

confidentiality, thus potentially impacting the degree and nature of the data that I obtained.

An example of my connection to the research setting and my personal involvement relates to an experience which occurred during my undergraduate years. While studying at the university, I missed one of my midterm exams due to an emergency. The reaction of the professor was tough and unsupportive which unfairly affected my grade at the end of the semester. The inflexible and rigid treatment I received raised many questions in my mind as a researcher and made me wonder how university systems influence students and their experiences. I have also reflected on how university systems can maximise students' experiences making them more enjoyable and beneficial.

I was also a graduate student at western universities located in the United States and United Kingdom which provided me with opportunities to explore different university settings and experiences. This western influence shaped my educational experience causing me to compare many features between my experiences in Saudi Arabia, the United States and the United Kingdom.

Coming to my research with this background definitely influenced the research process such as the interview questions I asked, discussions with participants, field notes and analysis of the data. Consequently, I was an insider to this research while trying to remain a naturalistic observer who was objective, rational and ethical. In spite of these attempts to remain neutral, it was not possible to eliminate the fact that I belonged to the culture evident in the research setting and could easily connect with it. On the other hand, I had not worked or studied at the university included in this study, so I could not anticipate any outcomes from research

participants who were living the experience. This reflected a feature of being an outsider to this research which emphasises the value of the triangulation process that examines data from multiple perspectives. The first perspective used in this research was the literature discussed in chapter 4. The literature reviewed for this study helped shape an image about the university's organisational structure and the way it influences students. The second perspective used in this study was collected data which provided rich information specific to the research site. Thirdly was the researcher who used her own objective interpretation of the data to connect findings with the literature.

Conclusion

This chapter covered the methodological approach that was adapted in this research. Since the study necessitated a substantial understanding of students', lecturers' and administrators' experiences at the selected university, it utilised an interpretive-qualitative orientation. This provided an appropriate framework for this research. Personal and direct involvement with students and staff was required to achieve this in-depth understanding. This chapter also illustrated aspects of naturalistic inquiry and ethnographic research that play important roles in this methodological approach.

The following chapter discusses methods that were used in this research. It also addresses the coding process and development of the interview questions.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

Research suggests that universities influence students during their college years academically, socially, personally and in many other aspects. The existence of a relationship between the organisational structures of institutions of higher education and students' learning experiences and outcomes has been emphasised by many researchers (Astin, 1993b; Barnett & Napoli, 2008; Berger, 2002a, 2002b; Berger & Milem, 2000; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1994). The quality and breadth of this existing research led me to take this as a starting point. Also, at the time of this study, there were no previous Saudi literatures which illustrated the issue of organisational behaviours with higher educational institutions and the way this influences students.

This thesis was based on the frameworks outlined in the literature which assume that there is a relationship between universities' organisational structures and students' perceptions of their learning experiences and outcomes during their college years (see chapter 4). The purpose of my research (see chapter 1) was to discover and understand the nature, structure and organisational behaviours of a private university in Saudi Arabia with specific consideration given to how and in what ways organisational behaviours influence students' learning experiences during their college years. Owing to the lack of published research on Saudi universities related to this subject, this research was based on western literatures and adapted western models as a foundation for this work. Special attention was given to Saudi society and culture as

well as Islamic beliefs and values (see chapters 3 and 4). These aspects, which are relevant to Saudi higher education, provided a foundation for data collection and analysis.

Research Question and Sub-questions

The main research question and sub-questions were developed based upon the literature review (see chapter 4) that described different organisational structures as well as models that connect universities' organisational cultures and structures to students. The sub-questions were formulated with the purpose of finding out how the selected university's organisational structure functioned, how it could be classified and how it was linked to students' learning experiences.

Research Question

How and in what ways does college organisational behaviour and culture influence students' learning experiences through their college years in a women's Saudi Arabian private university?

Sub-questions

1. How can the selected university's organisational structure be described?
2. What organisational factors (e.g., policy and regulation, academic curriculum, academic and non-academic activities, faculty and students' formal and informal contact, building facilities and accessibility) influence students' persistence and satisfaction?

Data collection for this thesis was divided into two major phases. The first part focused on examining the organisational structure and functionality of the selected university, while the second section considered students' learning experiences. The following section discusses the two phases of data collection in more detail. Figure 6.1 illustrates the research process and timing for each step of data collection.

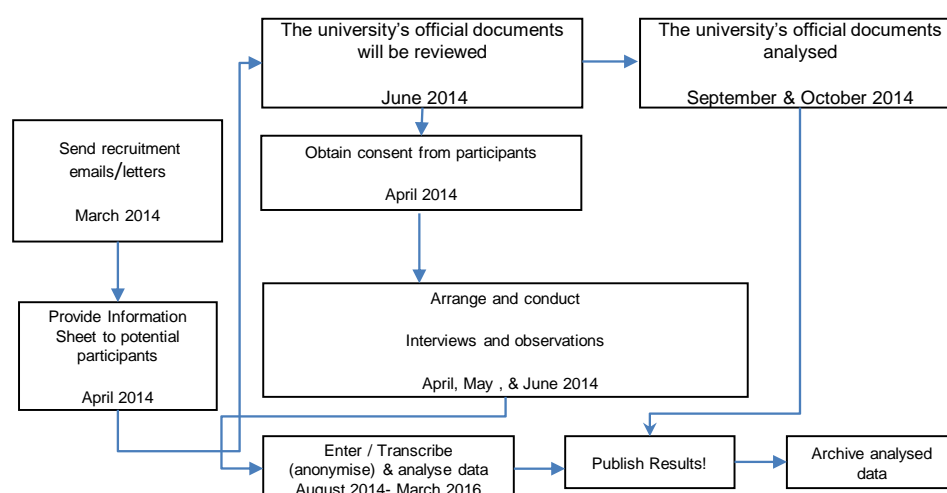


Figure 6.1. Example flowchart.

Research Participants

Participants were identified by the researcher on the basis of equivalence to key roles identified by the background literature. All participants were female, thus excluding variability in gender. Also, recommendations from the dean were sought in regard to possible research participants. The dean's perspective was helpful because

of her knowledge of the employees and her ability to recommend people who best related to my research interest.

The following describes the sampling process used for this study.

1. Administrators in charge of policy and decision-making processes were interviewed. These interviews provided an understanding of the nature of administrative processes and mechanisms for decision-making. Administrator participants were identified based on the nature and extent of interaction with students and application of the university's rules and regulations. The length of experience, as well as previous work experience in other universities, was considered when selecting administrators. The sample of administrators included the following:
 - a. *Dean of the women's campus.* The dean of the women's campus was in charge of supervision and administration for the entire women's campus. The dean was asked to reflect on decision-making processes, the mechanism of work (e.g., daily work routine, implementation of rules and regulations, conflict resolution), and the nature of relationships with faculty members and students and plans to improve the system.
 - b. *Member of the student affairs office.* The member of the student affairs office aimed to provide students with services and support regarding students' interactions as well as assisted students to become active members of the institution. This representative also helped students achieve their academic goals and prepared them for successful careers in the future.

- c. *Admission and registry office members.* The admission and registry office members reflected on the registration process as well as on admissions and transfers. Interviewees highlighted and critically considered facilities that the admission's office provided to students to make their college years more productive as well as efforts to ensure that students followed their core plans.
 - d. *Member of the human resource office.* The member of the human resource office provided descriptive details about work mechanisms (e.g., daily work routine, implementation of rules and regulations, conflict resolution) and the decision-making process.
 - e. *The heads of three departments.* These heads of department provided details in regard to the application of the university's rules and policies at a departmental level as well as highlighted the main issues that students and faculty members faced in relation to the research focus.
2. A select number of faculty members were interviewed about their experiences at the university. The selection process was based on administrators' recommendations which were driven by faculty members' length of teaching experience within the selected university, the breadth of departmental positions and responsibilities, their teaching loads and their teaching experience at PSU and other universities or colleges. A representative professor from each of five randomly selected departments was interviewed regarding their academic experiences within the university, their involvement at the administrative level and their relations with students.

3. Two focus group sessions with third and fourth-year students were undertaken with one group representing 10 students and the other 6. Student participants were identified based on the progress of their college academic year. Third and fourth-year students were selected randomly from various colleges and departments within this single case study institution, and they were chosen based upon their willingness to participate in the research. Including students from the various colleges provided a wide range of perspectives which reflected an overall viewpoint about students' experiences during their college years. Also, choosing third and fourth-year students highlighted the length of their college experiences which allowed them to build their own judgments and opinions about the university. It is important to note that participants were randomly selected regardless of their ethnicity, nationality and religious preferences. The sampling process aimed to understand the voice of the majority of students which represented the culture of the university and, therefore, may not have adequately characterised students in the minority (i.e., non-Muslim students or non-Arabic native speakers). Most student participants were native Arabic speakers; there were no non-Muslim students and only one non-Arabic native speaking student included in the sample. The reason for not including any non-Muslim students in this research sample was based on the university's demographics which, at the time of the study, reflected only 2 non-Muslim students out of 2,400 students at the women campus. Additionally, the majority of students at the university were Saudi Muslims. Owing to the sampling process being random as well as to participants' voluntary involvement in the study, it was impossible to

specifically request and require participation of the two non-Muslim students. As previously mentioned, the process of choosing student participants was based on their length of time at the university as well as variety in their courses of study. The two non-Muslim students may not have been in their third or fourth years of college, may not have wanted to participate, and may not have reflected the culture of the university. More importantly, specifically including the non-Muslim students in the sample would have negatively affected the validity and reliability of the sample, thus causing sampling bias. The one non-Arabic speaking student who took part in this research did so voluntarily and was included randomly with no specific intentions to include her. The majority of the interviewed students were Saudis, while three students from other countries were also represented. Nationalities of the non-Saudi students were not revealed due to research confidentiality. Revealing the nationality of the non-Saudi students might facilitate identification. Research participants were assured that the information they provided would remain anonymous. Assuring their privacy contributed to a comfortable environment where they were free to openly discuss their opinions and thoughts. In spite of this sampling decision, the value of minority voices and the potential contributions to research on this topic should not be underestimated. Focus group sessions highlighted students' experiences at the university considering areas such as their levels of satisfaction with the university system and their opinions about university policies.

All participants were approached by email which was followed by a one-on-one briefing with the researcher. Participation was entirely voluntary, and individuals

who wished to take part in the research were invited to contact the researcher using the university's email address to express their interest. Potential participants received an information sheet and consent form and were invited to meet with the researcher. Each interview included in this research was kept confidential, with participants' names being withheld from any reports or outputs from the study. Additionally, this research was conducted with the approval of the vice dean of the women's college as well as with participants' full consent.

The following section discusses the two phases of this research, the data collection process and the development of the codes for each research phase.

Phase One of the Research

The first part of this thesis focused on an in-depth examination of the organisational structure and culture of the selected university. Owing to this focus, several definitions of organisational structure and culture are considered below and were used as a framework for this research.

Organisational Models

Organisations are classified into different models or categories based upon the organisation's behaviours, structures and functionality. Organisational models and structures include the following: bureaucratic, collegial, political, symbolic and systematic (Berger & Milem, 2000; Bergquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Morgan, 2006). A detailed description of these models was offered in chapter 4.

Organisational Culture

Organisational culture is defined in this thesis as the combination of rituals, values, routines, myths, stories and symbols that reflect and represent the behaviours of groups of people, thus distinguishing them as a body (Dopson & McNay, 2000).

Building upon the previous definitions of organisational structure and culture as well as the organisational structures/models (Bergquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Morgan, 2006) discussed in chapter 4 of the dissertation, this thesis used a summary of key factors that examined the functionality of the selected university in the following areas: its organisational system; its demographic dimensions; the decision-making process; the nature of relationships among faculty members, administrators and students; and the rules and policies governing university practices. Study results and the analysis were drawn from data collected by myself as the sole researcher at the university and were supported by existing research (Berger & Milem, 2000; Bergquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Jones, 2010; Morgan, 2006) which was previously discussed in this thesis.

Data Collection: Phase One

During phase one of this research, a deep examination of the selected university's organisational structure and system took place. This analysis encompassed the structural-demographic features of the university as well as the university's organisational structure and behaviour. The structural-demographic features explored in this research were the size of the university's student body, the selection process, financial control (i.e., public/private), the location of the campus and the student/faculty ratio. Examination of the university's organisational structure

focused on the university's policies, roles, regulations, decision-making process, functionality and other administrative aspects.

Data collection during this stage included a desk survey of the university's key official documents and the university's website. This survey included a deep examination and review of the selected university's organisational structure and the system's official documents and charts. Data collected from interviews with some of the members of administration (e.g., dean of the women's campus, department heads, members of register's office) were also used during this stage of the research. The focus of these interviews was to discuss mechanisms of the university's operating system and the decision-making process. This examination provided a deeper understanding of the university's organisational structure and environment and offered greater detail about the nature of relationships among university members.

These descriptive details helped to categorise the organisational structure of the selected university into the organisational structures/models (Bergquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Morgan, 2006) discussed in chapter 4 of the dissertation. The university was also classified under some of the following frameworks: bureaucratic, collegial, political, symbolic and systematic (Bergquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Morgan, 2006). Results from this stage of the research were compared with the organisational models and structures discussed in this dissertation in order to identify the main features of the selected university's organisational structure as it related to these frameworks.

The following table summarises various organisational models and highlights the main features of each model. The work of multiple researchers is represented with

their main ideas and definitions being summarised in the table. These characteristics were used as a comparison for the university being studied.

Table 6.1

Organisational Models and Their Defining Features

(Bergquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Morgan, 2006)

Organisational models	Organisational features of each model
<i>Bureaucratic</i>	Operates as a machine, is organised, has clear goals and responsibilities and has a centralised formal structure. The system is hierarchical in its leadership with clear classification of authority and rationality in the decision-making process.
<i>Collegial</i>	Socially-oriented model reflects a caring and nurturing environment. Important components of this model are clarity, honesty and interaction and shared activities among the organisation's members. Leadership emphasises collaboration, equality, democracy and autonomy.
<i>Political</i>	The organisation's structures have a driven interest and clear goals. Members negotiate, build coalitions among group members and compromise to achieve results that serve their interests and are advantageous. Power is the controlling element in this model.
<i>Symbolic</i>	Organisation emphasises teamwork; harmony; shared meanings, concerns and values; and collective efforts and goals. Leadership is informal. Motivation and aspiration exist and are used to strengthen values and the meaning of the organisation.
<i>Systematic</i>	Organisation reflects an automatic ability to recognise and sense changes within the environment, to control these changes and to adapt to them in order to maintain stability within the organisation. Leaders of these organisations do not usually intervene with all of the work; rather, they focus on routine obligations and tasks.

Codes for Phase One of the Research

In order to analyse the university's organisational structure, it was essential to identify key words or codes that best described each organisational model as outlined in chapter 4. Since it was unlikely that any one of these models would precisely fit the university, and since it was more likely that the institution would reflect aspects from more than one organisational structural model, these organisational structural models were used to provide an underlying theoretical framework for considering and classifying the university's organisational structure.

Following are the main characteristics of the codes which represent each organisational structure. These codes were used when reviewing and analysing the university's official documents and interview transcriptions from the participants. The process of developing the codes was mainly based on the features of each organisational structural model that was described earlier in chapter 4. They also focused on the mechanisms of the university's operating system and the decision-making process as well as a deep examination of the university's culture and environment, with great emphasis on the nature of relationships among university members.

1. Bureaucratic model.

- a. Clear rules, policies and regulations guide most administrative actions (Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2008).
- b. Clear responsibilities and duties (Bergquist, 1992).
- c. Written job descriptions exist for all positions (Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2008).

- d. Specific protocols are followed for most administrative actions (Bergquist, 1992).
- e. Organised coordination is evident for campus events and activities (Bolman & Deal, 2008).
- f. A top-down, centralised and formal administration style is reflected in the leadership (Birnbaum, 1988; Morgan, 2006).
- g. The system is hierarchical in its leadership with clear classification of authority and rationality in the decision-making process (Birnbaum, 1988; Morgan, 2006).

2. *Collegial model.*

- a. A socially-oriented model reflects a caring and nurturing environment (Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2008).
- b. The faculty respect one another, which is represented in both formal and informal relationships (Bergquist, 1992).
- c. A strong sense of community exists (Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2008).
- d. People enjoy working and studying on campus and demonstrate loyalty to their institution (Birnbaum, 1988).
- e. The leadership emphasises collaboration, equality, democracy and autonomy (Bergquist, 1992).
- f. A high level of student and faculty involvement is represented in the decision-making process (McNay, 1995).

3. *Political model.*

- a. Leaders' self-interest and political agendas are highlighted (Morgan, 2006).
- b. There is limited student and faculty involvement in campus activities and in the decision-making process (Bergquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1988).
- c. The university is a highly competitive organisation (Bergquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1988).

4. *Symbolic model.*

- a. The organisation emphasises teamwork; harmony; shared meanings, concerns and values; and collective efforts and goals (Morgan, 2006).
- b. Values, rituals and symbols are emphasised more than common goals (Bolman & Deal, 2008).
- c. The campus has unique traditions with an informal leadership style (Morgan, 2006).
- d. Stories of the college history are well known and valued (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Morgan, 2006).

5. *Systematic model.*

- a. The college's reputation among external institutions influences programmes and policy development (Birnbaum, 1988; Morgan, 2006).
- b. There is significant dependence on external support to solve problems and conflicts (Berger & Milem, 2000; Morgan, 2006).

By the conclusion of the first segment of data collection, the researcher was able to answer the following research question: What is the organisational structure and culture that is most applicable or best describes the selected university?

Phase Two of the Research

Students' perceptions regarding their learning environment play important roles in shaping their experiences and outcomes (Astin, 1993b; Selkirk College, 2003). Therefore, it was essential to know and understand students' feelings, opinions and perceptions in regard to their college environment at the studied university. Students' perceptions contributed positively to this research data by illuminating students' voices and opinions, which are usually neglected. Using students' perceptions in regard to their learning experiences within the university also illuminated aspects of the university's system that students viewed as strengths and weaknesses. It was anticipated that these perceptions could be useful for the university's administration in improving the system for the benefit of the students.

Before discussing this phase of data collection, it is important to clarify the meaning of student experience that was utilised in this research. As discussed earlier in chapter 4, student experience refers to the processes that are influenced by many aspects of students' college years such as their personal expectations, social integration, peer interaction, parents' background, degree programmes, extracurricular activities and career plans after graduation (Jones, 2010). Additionally, Berger and Milem (2000) categorised student experience into three major areas: academic experience, social experience and functional experience. These areas are similar to the

following aspects of Jones's (2010) model of student experience: personal, academic and social features.

The three main areas of Berger and Milem's (2000) model are useful when examining students' experiences during their college years and are described below as well as outlined in Figure 6.2:

1. *Academic experience.* Cognitive development, attainment of educational objectives, learning in and out of class, grades and programme progress.
2. *Social experience.* Interactions and relationships among students and faculty members.
3. *Functional experience.* Students' levels of interaction with the organisational structure of the college (e.g., dealing with financial aid, tuition and fees, following university rules and regulations, accessibility to campus buildings, cafeteria and food quality).

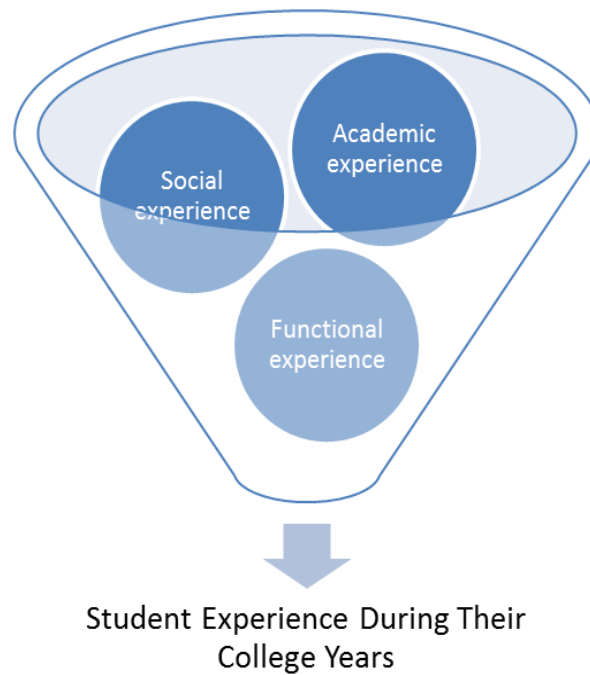


Figure 6.2. Student experience during their college years (Berger & Milem, 2000).

Berger and Milem's (2000) model emphasises the central importance of human relationships and the influence on the quality of students' experiences. Their model suggests that students' learning experiences during their college years can be influenced by the collective efforts of faculty, staff, administrators and other students. Students' experiences reflect important factors such as their levels of satisfaction, which is evidence of their degree of happiness in relation to their experiences and the nature and quality of their social integration.

This thesis utilised Jones's (2010) as well as Berger and Milem's (2000) approaches regarding student experience. Therefore, this study illustrated students' experiences as a process rather than a product highlighting the factors (i.e., academic, functional and social) that influenced this process and affected students during their

college years. Use of students' perceptions can potentially offer one of the best ways to examine student experience.

Berger and Milem's model (2000) was used as the framework for this thesis when examining the relationship between the university's organisational structures and students' learning experiences. This model is unique in that it combines three well-respected and cited models focused on students' college experiences and outcomes (see Astin, 1993b; Tinto, 1994; Weidman, 1989). Berger and Milem (2000) sought a more comprehensive understanding of student experience and outcomes by examining both students' behaviours and perceptions, connecting this to the organisational structures of the universities students attended.

A major limitation of using Berger and Milem's (2000) model within this research was the fact that this study examined a Saudi private women's university. However, Berger and Milem's model, like most of the previous models, was developed and tested among traditional-aged students in an on-campus university environment in the United States. This introduced the following concerns when using Berger and Milem's model: (a) The research setting for this study was a private university, whereas Berger and Milem's model was based on a public institution. (b) Cultural differences existed between their model and this study. This study highlighted an Arabic and Muslim culture, and their research was centred on a western culture. (c) There were differences in the sample of participants with this study only including females as opposed to Berger and Milem's research encompassing both genders. In spite of these limitations and differences, the lack of literature on the Saudi context, as noted earlier, necessitated using studies conducted in different settings but with similar purposes. This study provided an opportunity to

see if features of Berger and Milem's model were useful in helping explain students' learning experiences in a Saudi private university when utilising a qualitative research approach.

Data Collection: Phase Two

The second phase of data collection was based on interviewing a select number of faculty members and focus groups of third and fourth-year college students as well as conducting classroom observations. Due to the fact that most research participants spoke English fluently, interview questions and discussions were mainly conducted in English. Additionally, interview transcriptions were all written in English. One participant preferred to use the Arabic language during the interviews which required translation of the questions during the interviews and translation of the answers during the transcription. This step required careful review of the interview and transcription in order to ensure that everything was included and nothing was lost in translation.

Interviews with faculty members explored teaching methods, ways of assessing and supporting students and evaluated their levels of involvement with students. Interviews with students in focus groups explored students' viewpoints and perceptions in regard to their experiences during their college years as well as provided a sense of their satisfaction with their college experiences.

During the focus group interviews, students were asked about progress in their programmes, class work and assignments loads, assessment processes, class and college rules and regulations, levels of interaction with their professors (e.g., professors' availability, support and flexibility), their levels of social integration with

other students and their ability to make friends. Students were also asked about their perceptions of campus facilities such as the computer lab, Internet facilities, and building accessibility, as well as the location of the college and the cafeteria and quality of the food. These factors were discussed in terms of how they contributed to students' college experiences.

The second phase of data collection also included observations of the library and other facilities such as restaurants and parking lots. Such observations contributed to evidence of students' levels of comfort on the campus which, to some extent, was connected to their learning experiences. Detailed field notes were taken during these interviews and observations. Field notes were reviewed several times, coded and analysed.

Interview questions for this research and the development of the codes (the coding process) that were used during data analysis drew upon the three categories (i.e., academic experience, social experience and functional experience) outlined in Berger and Milem's (2000) model, which were discussed earlier in this chapter. These categories were used to examine how students' experiences are influenced by a university's organisational structure. The following section outlines the questions that were asked during the interviews with administrators, faculty members and the student focus groups.

Interview Questions

Following are the questions that students were asked during the interview process. Interview questions were open-ended, and participants were given time and

opportunities to express their thoughts and experiences freely without interruptions. Interview questions were based on the categories outlined by Berger and Milem (2000) as well as Jones (2010) in their models. These categories included students' academic experiences, social experiences and functional experiences.

Interview Schedule for Student Focus Group

Before starting my questions, can you tell me about yourself and your background?

Academic Experience

1. Has your progress in your programme gone as you expected? If so, how? If not, why? Has there been any delay?
 - a. *Probe:* To what degree does the course/program meet the expectations you had of it before you started?
2. In regard to the course load, material and quality, do you think that the course was well-managed and the curriculum was fairly explained?
 - a. *Prompts:* homework load, test quality, course organisation, grading, curriculum quality.
3. Can you think of any ways in which the university's academic rules and policies have influenced your learning experience?
 - a. *Prompts:* the program plan, the grading process, the coursework loads, the teaching quality, the curriculum, active involvement with the course materials.
 - b. *Probe:* Do faculty members understand the difficulties that students might be having with their work and provide help to ease any difficulties?

Social Experience

1. How would you describe your experience of meeting others within the university?

- a. *Prompts*: formal and informal interactions with instructors and administrators; sense of community, friends, support.
 - b. *Probe*: Are you involved in academic activities that mean that you meet other students and members of the College's staff? (e.g., collaborative learning, tutoring groups and conference attendance) and non-academic activities (e.g. charity events)? Does this influence your college experience? If so, how? If not, why?
2. Could you describe the nature of your relationship with your advisor/instructors? Can you perhaps think of an incident that would be a good example of the kind of relationships that you experience?
 - a. *Prompts*: help, support, guide, flexibility.
 - b. *Probe*: In the case of problems or difficulties, can students interact with the faculty and administrators (e.g., department head, assistant dean) easily and smoothly and find the help and support they need?
3. Do you feel a sense of community within the college? If so, how? If not, why?
4. Do you believe that this institution has within it a commitment and practical implications to the Islamic religious faith?
 - How, if at all, do you notice this?
 - What difference does this make to what and how you learn?
 - Do you have any views on this aspect of your university experience?
 - a. *Prompts*: praying area, praying time brake, dressing code and regulation, religious classes and lectures.

5. For the not-Muslim participants, do you believe that the Islamic religious faith and practices are embodied within the university roles, regulations, and daily routine? If yes, how?

Functional Experience

1. Which of the College's facilities are the most important to you? How does the quality of these affect your experiences at the university?
 - a. *Prompts:* computer lab, access to the Internet, lounge, cafeteria and quality of the food, gym, library and the pricing and availability of textbooks.
2. How do the college's regulations and policies in regard to attendance, registration and withdrawal from classes and course loads influence you?
 - a. *Prompts:* positive and negative factors that influence the students' daily routines at the college.
3. Looked at overall, has your college experience influenced your future plans? Has it made you more or less likely to proceed with graduate studies or a professional career? Why?
 - a. *Prompts:* study Masters in the same university, get employed by the same university, positive or negative environment.
4. Do you think that this university helps to prepare you for life as a woman in Saudi society?
 - a. *Prompts:* market demand, mixed gender work environment.

Interview Schedule for Faculty Members

Before starting my questions, can you tell me about yourself and your background?

Academic Experience

1. Can you tell me about your academic experience within the university?
 - a. Prompts: grading system, course organisation, academic involvement with the students, freedom to choose the curriculum, students' progress.
2. Do faculty members understand the difficulties that students might be having with their work and provide help to ease any difficulties?
 - a. *Prompts:* difficulty understanding the curriculum, homework load, submission deadlines, testing conflicts.
3. Is the course material explained well to students?
4. Do students in this university continue smoothly in their programmes and with their plans to finish their degrees? If so, how? If not, why?
5. Does the grading process seem fair and reasonable? If so, how? If not, why?
6. Does the instructor have the freedom to choose his/her class curriculum?

Social Experience

1. Who do you interact with most in the university? How would you describe the quality of those relationships? If you do not interact with particular groups, can you say why? why?

- a. *Prompts:* sense of community within the college, formal and informal interaction with students and colleagues, social events and participation.
2. Do you feel a sense of community within the college? If so, how? If not, why?
3. Do you believe that this institution has within it a commitment and practical implications to the Islamic religious faith?
 - How, if at all, do you notice this?
 - What difference does this make to what and how you learn?
 - Do you have any views on this aspect of your university experience?
- a. *Prompts:* praying area, praying time brake, dressing code and regulation, religious classes and lectures.
4. For the not-Muslim participants, do you believe that the Islamic religious faith and practices are embodied within the university roles, regulations, and daily routine? If yes, how?

Functional Experience

1. Are you able to find the required materials for the course curriculum?
2. Do you receive the support that you need from the university in relation to improving your teaching?
 - a. *Prompts:* conference attendance, training sessions, availability of course materials.
 - b. *Probe:* Are you involved in decision making processes at a department level as well as the college level?

3. Has your professional experience within this university influenced your future career plans? Why?

a. Prompts: contract renewal, research publications, graduate studies.

4. Have your role, authority and experience within the university influenced or restricted due to the fact that it is a women campus?

a. Prompts: Decision making process, salary scale, gender equity.

Interview Schedule for Administrators

Before starting my questions, can you tell me about yourself and your background?

Academic Experience

1. Can you tell me about your role within the university?
2. As an administrator, how helpful or otherwise are the university's rules and regulations? Are there any particular areas of difficulty?
3. What factors could improve the quality of your work and make it more beneficial?
 - a. *Prompts:* Decision making processes, implementation of regulations and policies, dealing with difficulties and conflicts, level of flexibility as well as limitations, providing physical and emotional support to faculty members, mechanism of the work.

Social Experience

1. Who do you interact with most in the university? How would you describe the quality of those relationships? If you do not interact with particular groups, can you say why?
 - a. *Prompts:* Interaction with faculty members, staff and students; sense of community; events and social participation.
2. Do you believe that this institution has within it a commitment and practical implications to the Islamic religious faith?
 - How, if at all, do you notice this?
 - What difference does this make to what and how you learn?

- Do you have any views on this aspect of your university experience?
- a. *Prompts:* praying area, praying time brake, dressing code and regulation, religious classes and lectures.
- 3. For the not-Muslim participants, do you believe that the Islamic religious faith and practices are embodied within the university roles, regulations, and daily routine? If yes, how?

Functional Experience

1. How do the university's facilities affect your work environment?
 - a. *Prompts:* Internet accessibility, college emails, general supplies and facilities.
2. Has your professional experience within this university influenced your future career plans? In what ways?
3. Has your role, authority and experience within the university influenced or restricted due to the fact that it is a women campus?
 - a. *Prompts:* Decision making process, salary scale, gender equity.

Results from this stage of data collection were integrated with data and findings from phase one and suggested connections between the selected college's organisational structure and students' learning experiences. Findings were compared to Berger and Milem's (2000) model with respect to cultural differences (between Saudi and western cultures) and methodological differences. The methodological approach that Berger and Milem's (2000) model adapted was a quantitative approach, while this research used a qualitative approach.

Codes for Phase Two of the Research

This section examines the process of developing the codes that was used for analysing the interview transcripts. In order to analyse the interviews, sets of codes were developed for each interviewee category. As mentioned before, the coding process was based on the literature, the research questions as well as the interviews' outcome contexts. Coding made it possible to break up the data and to address what was being sought by the research questions for each interviewee category. Sets of codes were developed and assigned to specific groups based upon the three main categories (i.e., academic experience, social experience and functional experience) outlined in Berger and Milem's (2000) model, which was used as a guide for this research. Codes in these three categories were used when examining students' experiences during their college years. The following figure outlines the codes and specific categories that were used during data analysis for this research.

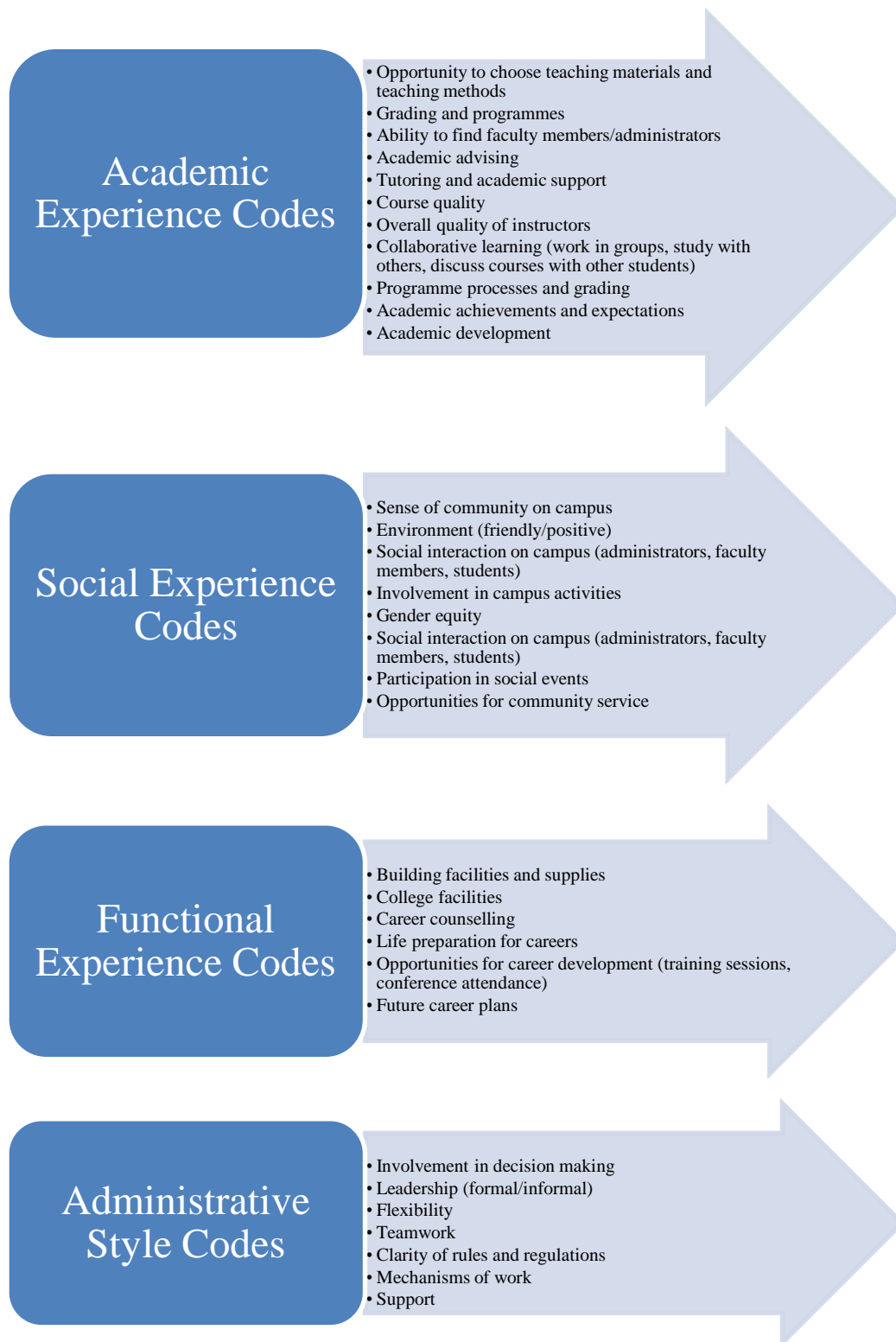


Figure 6.3. Categories and codes used for data analysis.

Since research participants included administrators, faculty members and students, coding of the data was grouped into three categories based on the types of research participants. Each of the three main groups of codes was developed with one set of codes for each interviewee category (i.e., administrators, faculty members and students). Grouping the codes helped to simplify data analysis and to highlight the purposes of the interview questions. Codes for the administrators' interviews were intended to explore the university's leadership style as well as general organisational administrative functions. Codes for faculty interviews were intended to explore faculty responsibilities, their level of involvement in the decision-making process and, most importantly, their relationship with students. Finally, the intention of the codes for the student interviews was to reveal their perceptions about their college experiences and overall satisfaction of the university. Each of these codes was drawn from the literature, research questions as well as contexts from the interviews' outcomes.

After examining the interview transcripts using these codes, three categories of analysis were adopted, which further helped to organise the data. These categories were the academic, social and functional experiences of research participants. These three categories were used to measure participants' levels of satisfaction and were linked to Berger and Milem's model (2000) that was identified earlier as the guide for this research (see Figure 6.2). Each of these three categories contains specific codes that illustrate the main purposes of the research questions and highlight specific findings.

Since the three analysis categories that were drawn from Berger and Milem's (2000) model only addressed the academic, social and functional experiences of

research participants and since these categories were not sufficient to cover one of the main issues that this research meant to explore and identify, or that of the classification of the university's organisational structure from research participants' perspectives, a fourth category was developed and added. Also, the lack of official documents provided by the university to support the classification of the university's organisational structure reinforced the need for a fourth category. The development of the fourth category, the administrative style, was based on relevant literature, the research questions and findings from the first part of data analysis. This category, administrative style, aimed to explore the university's organisational administrative structure from research participants' perspectives comparing participants' viewpoints with findings from the first part of data analysis. This category was also used to connect research results from this analysis section with results from the first part of the analysis to see if they coincided. Codes for this category were developed from the literature, the research questions as well as the interviews' contexts. (See Appendices A, B and C for a list of these codes.) After processing data through these codes and organising results into the four categories, research findings were written and discussed using Berger and Milem's (2000) model as well as other literature as a foundation.

Strengths and Limitations

A major strength of this research is that it explored an area of the Saudi higher educational system that was not previously researched. Treating colleges and universities as organisational systems and analysing their organisational structures in depth has not been discussed or examined before in this context. Therefore, this thesis

is a starting point for further research focusing on the structures of Saudi colleges as this relates to students' experiences during their college years.

Most models and research that examine the relationship between college organisational structures and behaviours and students' learning experiences, outcomes, persistence and socialisation have used quantitative methodological approaches. In contrast, this thesis drew upon a qualitative approach, differentiating it from previous research.

This research was based upon an Arabic Muslim university in Saudi Arabia, so the reliance on Berger and Milem's (2000) model could be viewed as a limitation of this thesis owing to their model's focus on western perspectives. However, earlier chapters discussed how the Saudi higher educational system is highly influenced by the higher educational systems of the United States and United Kingdom.

Having a small sample might be considered a limitation to this study, as it may not have provided a comprehensive overview of students' experiences and their satisfaction. Meanwhile, it is important to point out that this research is a case study with limitations in time, access to the research site and research participants. These limitations might weaken the generalisability of research results and, therefore, emphasise the need for future research on this topic.

Another limitation is the sampling of only one private university, therefore restricting the generalisability of findings to the broader population. Owing to time and financial limitations of the researcher, who is a Ph.D. student, this thesis could not be expanded at the time of the study. However, the qualitative approach of a single case study provided an in-depth examination of the research topic and the selected university.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis generally seems to be complex, with no agreed universal method. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested several approaches and methods to qualitative analysis to ease the process. A detailed description of qualitative data analysis methods and approaches is provided in chapter 5. Miles and Huberman (1994) recommended beginning data analysis during the data collection period as opposed to leaving data analysis to the end of a study. Early analysis gave me the chance to understand the data more deeply, to make connections between the data and to minimise the oversight of important issues. Early analysis also helped connect findings from the first and second phases of the research and linked it to the guiding literature.

Literature (Berger & Miley, 2000; Bergquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Jones, 2010; Morgan, 2006) related to the organisational structures of universities (discussed in chapter 4) was used as a foundation for formulating the interview questions, developing the codes and in data collection and analysis. This research reflected ongoing qualitative data analysis (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) with this process beginning with development of the research questions and continuing through final analysis of the data. This reflects Rossman and Rallis's (2003) belief that data analysis should begin at the conceptualisation phase of a study and remain ongoing throughout the course of the research.

Codes that were developed from literature on organisational models (Bergquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Morgan, 2006) guided data collection and analysis during the second phase of this research as well. The purpose

of using these codes during the second phase of this research was to classify the university's organisational structure based upon research participants' perspectives along with support from data included in the first phase. Organisational models described in the literature helped in the development of an additional analysis category (i.e., the administrative style) that was used to explore the university's organisational structure from the perspective of research participants. The development of a new analysis category resulted from a need to understand the university's organisational structure from participants' perspectives. This is supported by Glaser and Strauss's (1967) description of the constant comparative method which encourages the general development of categories, subcategories and themes through a process of analysis that begins with the initial collection of data.

The second phase of this research was mainly developed and designed utilising Berger and Milem's (2000) model. This research drew upon Berger and Milem's (2000) categories (i.e., academic experience, social experience and functional experience) that were used to explore students' experiences during their college years. These three categories along with the newly developed category supported the development of the interview questions, data collection, coding process and analysis.

Interview questions were created and developed based on the research questions and literature that was discussed in chapter 4 with special attention given to Berger and Milem's (2000) model. The purpose of this research (discussed in chapter 1) as well as the research questions guided the development of the interview questions. Interview questions were designed to help the researcher explore the

relationship between the university's organisational structure and students' experiences from participants' perspectives.

Development of the codes began during the interviews and transfer of data into written transcriptions. This stage required in-depth reading and repeated review of the interview transcriptions. Each interview transcription was reduced to analysis notes which contained the main points of the transcription. This was followed by identification of the key factors or codes that best described what the researcher was looking for and at the same time was linked to (or based on) the literature (Berger & Milem, 2000; Bergquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Jones, 2010; Morgan, 2006).

Analysis notes illustrated the main issues that the researcher was looking for and were related to the research questions. These notes were constantly checked using original transcripts during coding and data analysis. Moreover, generation of the codes did not solely depend on analysis notes, but was mainly based on consistent revision and rereading of original transcriptions in order to eliminate the possibility of leaving data un-coded or to reduce the risk of losing valuable information. Also, to ensure maximum representation of the collected data, the coding process accompanied the transcription process and was highlighted and summarised through analysis notes.

Figure 6.3 illustrates the four main categories and codes for each category that were used to examine and analyse the data. Analysis of the interview transcriptions led to categorisation of the university's organisational structure based upon interviewees' perspectives regarding their college experiences. Results obtained from

this analysis were connected with results from phase one of the research and relevant literature which helped answer the research questions.

Limitations of Data Analysis

There are two major limitations specific to the case study method. First, the case study method is context dependent, and as such, conclusions cannot be generalised to other institutions (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Therefore, findings from this study are not necessarily applicable to other universities. However, Rossman and Rallis (2003) also pointed out that when a case is seen as sufficiently similar to another setting, logical reasoning may point to some findings that are applicable across situations. Therefore, conclusions from this study have the potential to yield transferable knowledge that could be used to inform broader studies that include larger samples.

Second, the case study is considered to be interpretive research (Creswell, 2003). As such, there is a danger of results being impacted by researcher bias or subjectivity (Merriam, 1998). However, maintaining rigour in data collection and analysis as well as obtaining ongoing feedback from other professionals can minimise the effects of researcher subjectivity. Rossman and Rallis (2003) recommended a number of strategies for ensuring that research is credible and rigorous. Multiple methods of data collection and analysis in this research included a review of official documents, observations as well as interviews.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a detailed overview of the research methods used in this study. A comprehensive description of the research site where the data were collected as well as details about the development of the interview questions and the coding process was provided.

The following chapter presents and analyses the data that were collected in this thesis and is followed with a discussion of the research results.

CHAPTER 7

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

The previous chapters provided extensive detail about organisational models or structures and the methodology and methods that were used in this research. This chapter aims to answer the research questions by exploring the data and analysing it in light of the literature that was reviewed. The following research question guided this study: How and in what ways does college organisational behaviour and culture influence students' learning experiences through their college years in a women's Saudi Arabian private university?

As discussed earlier in chapter 6, data analysis was divided into two sections, with each section focusing on separate and distinct issues. The first section dealt with the analysis of official documents collected from university officials as well as the university's website. Based upon analysis of these documents and using the literature as a framework for the process, the university's organisational structure was classified.

The second section includes an analysis of the interview transcriptions using categorisations and codes that were identified based upon the literature as well as the content of the interviews. Evidence from this section of the research is intended to illuminate how the university's organisational structure influences people within the organisation, with particular attention given to students' perceptions about their college experiences.

Further data analysis then considers both sections of research jointly in order to link the founding of the analysis to Berger and Milem's (2000) model which is used as a framework for this analysis.

Data Analysis: Part One

Classification of the Selected University's Organisational Structure

This section deals with the categorisation of PSU's organisational structure. The classification is based on official documents collected from the university, information from the university's website and interviews with study participants.

As discussed previously in the literature review (see chapter 4), institutions of higher education generally reflect five distinguishable organisational structures or models: bureaucratic, collegial, political, symbolic and systematic. Literature on organisational structures, discussed in chapter 4 (Berger & Milem, 2000; Bergquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Morgan, 2006), was used as a framework for analysis of the university's website and official documents. The following table gives an overview of the five organisational models of institutions of higher education.

Table 7.1

Five Organisational Models of Institutions of Higher Education

Model	Characteristics	Strengths	Weaknesses
Bureaucratic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centralised authority Decisions occur from the top-down Hierarchical structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear goals and mission Clear hierarchy and authority among members Stable environment Standardised procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devalues individual contributions Leads to a static work environment
Collegial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socially-oriented Emphasises individual contributions Members involved in decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication is valued Favoured by members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be challenging to execute in large organisations
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on two processes: coalition and negotiation Power is the controlling element 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competition, negotiation and the utilisation of power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less emphasis on collaboration Conflict with principles that emphasise autonomy and equity
Symbolic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal leadership Shared meanings and values Both anarchical and subjective model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates respectful and team-oriented environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflicts with needs for certainty and clarity Difficult to make change
Systematic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open system with elements of the other models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective relationship with the surrounding environment Capacity for change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focuses more on the input of information rather than the output of data

In order to understand the nature of organisational behaviour within the selected private university and how the system operated, several stages of interviewing and observation were needed. This included undertaking a desk survey of the university's key official documents. This survey included a deep examination

and review of the selected university's organisational structure and system's official documents and charts. This analysis encompassed the structural-demographic features of the university as well as the university's organisational structure and behaviour. The structural-demographic features that were explored were the size of the university's student body, the selection process, financial control (public/private), the location of the campus and the student/faculty ratio. Examination of the university's organisational structure focused on the university's policies, roles, regulations, decision-making process, functionality and other administrative aspects. The descriptive details from this step help to categorise the organisational structure of the selected university into one of the organisational structures/models.

Before analysing the university's official documents and information from its website, it is important to note that the university provided limited documents supporting this research study. The university's administration supplied general handbooks that addressed standard rules and regulations guiding undergraduate study at the university as well as the governing policies and regulations that outlined employees' duties and rights (Deanship of Admission and Registration, 2014; Prince Sultan University, 2013). The university's website also revealed limited information about the organisational function of the university and its administrative system. The university's website and handbooks provide very limited information about the nature of the university's organisational structure. Access to limited information seems to be typical of the Saudi higher educational system when compared with other higher educational systems and may affect public accountability because of the lack of transparency. Therefore, a significant portion of this analysis relies on data that were collected during the interviews.

Based upon analysis of the data collected and taking into account the lack of official documents and information available on the university's website, the university's organisational structure reflected a top-down pyramid system. All important decisions, and in fact most decisions of all types, came from the university's highest leaders. In two university handbooks (Deanship of Admission and Registration, 2014; Prince Sultan University, 2013) outlining policies and procedures at PSU, it was stated that everyone has specific authority, duties and obligations that need to be fulfilled. For example, professors and instructors are expected to work closely with their students, motivating students to achieve their best in a fair manner. Furthermore, they have additional responsibilities that deal with teaching and grading as well as participating in conferences and holding meetings with the administration. However, faculty members' participation in administrative decisions is very limited. University members' limited involvement in decision making is discussed in detail as part of the analysis.

Since one of the data sources for this research was the university's website, it is essential to highlight observations that accrued during analysis of the website. The university's official website did not provide extensive information about the establishment of the university, neither about the administrative culture or structure of the university. The only administrative feature that was provided was an organisational chart outlining the university's highest leaders and their positions. This may reflect a weakness in the university's presentation of itself to outsiders since it may not provide a clear sense of the university's culture and organisational structure. Also, the organisational chart did not provide any descriptions or explanatory details regarding leaders' positions, functions and duties. The organisational chart also lacked

information about decision-making processes, the management system and the university's working mechanisms. Cultural aspects such as the influence of the Saudi culture, Islamic culture and the high sense of community that were emphasised during the research interviews were entirely absent from the university's website. Also, social activities provided by the university for its students and the community as well as community efforts to collaborate with the university were not well-presented in information on the university's website. This lack of information on the university's website did not align with data collected during the interviews and may negatively influence the way that the university presents its identity on the website. This might suggest that the university does not have an open culture and does not clearly communicate with the public which might negatively influence its accountability.

The figure below provides a broad overview of how the university's system operates from the top to the bottom.

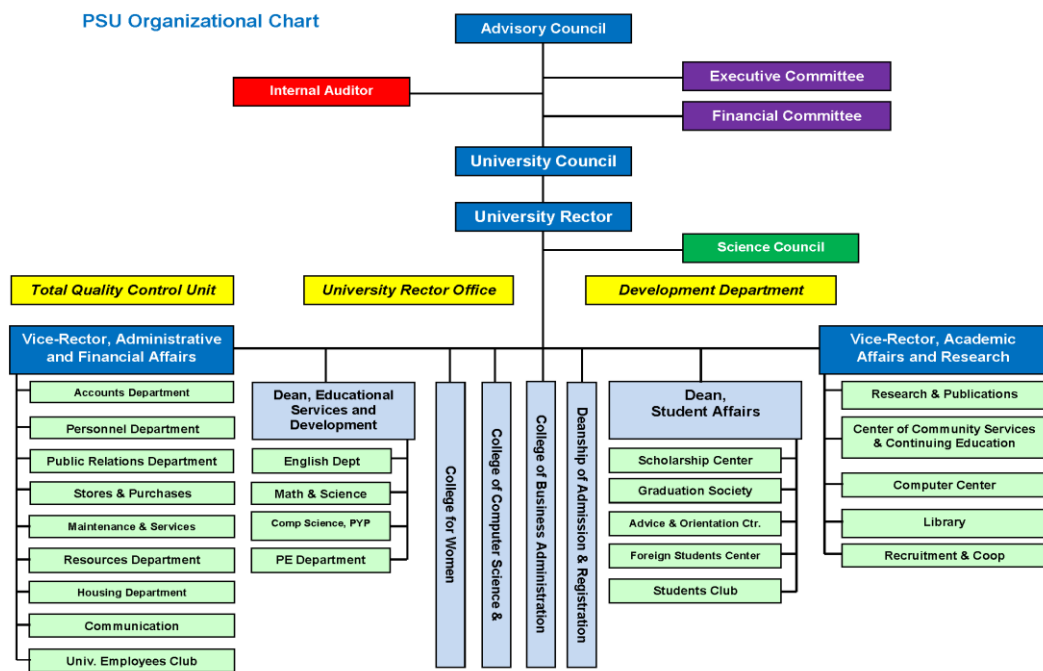


Figure 7.1. Official PSU organisational chart (Prince Sultan University, 2015c).

Analysis of the university's official documents and website suggested that the university's organisational structure is mainly bureaucratic. The clarity of work mechanisms, clear rules, and regulations and the centralisation of decision-making processes were all apparent in the university's administrative system. Although the documents provided by the university were few (i.e., a scant website and two general handbooks) and revealed limited information that did not reflect the real culture and administrative style of the selected university, the lines of authority seemed clear. This was demonstrated in the handling of important issues by the top management, which reflected a top-down management style. Interviews with research participants

played an important role in obtaining more information and exploring the nature of the selected university's organisational structure and culture. While it is not uncommon for institutions of higher education to emphasise the formal structure of their organisations, the substantial influence of bureaucratic features of PSU were also emphasised by research participants, thus leading to research conclusions that the bureaucratic organisational style is likely pervasive at the studied university.

Analysis of the university's official documents and their website raised the following questions that were addressed during the interviews.

1. Do research participants perceive there to be a hierarchical administrative system?
2. How does the bureaucratic system influence research participants' work and experiences within the college?
3. What are both positive and negative aspects raised by research participants in regard to the bureaucratic features of the university's organisational structure?

The following section discusses interviewees' responses to the above questions as well as their perceptions in regard to their experiences at PSU. The following section also discusses and analyses interviewees' perceptions relating to the university's administrative style, which illustrates the link between findings from the university's official documents and website analysis and analysis of the views expressed in the interviews. Thus, a clearer picture of the university's organisational structure was obtained through a process of triangulation.

Data Analysis: Part Two

The Influence of the Selected University's Organisational Structure on Students' College Experiences

The previous section aimed to classify the selected university's organisational structure by analysing the university's official documents and website, suggesting that the university's structure was bureaucratic. After classifying the university's organisational structure, the relationship between the structure and students' college experiences was examined. The following section discusses how students were affected by the university's organisational structure.

This section examines the process for analysing the interview transcripts. In order to analyse the interviews, sets of codes were developed for each interviewee category. As mentioned before in chapter 6, the coding process was based on the literature and the research questions as well as on the interviews' contexts. As previously described in chapter 6, data analysis for this research was based on four categories (i.e., administrative style, academic experience, social experience and functional experience). The following are the descriptive analyses and results for each category.

In the following sections, data are presented using pseudonyms in order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity of the research participants. The following initials were developed for each participant category. Administrator participants are represented by the initials AD, faculty members are presented using the initials FM and students are indicated with the initials ST. Numbers were also added to the previous initials for further identification.

The Administrative Style

Since this research focused on the women's colleges at PSU, it is essential to note that the women's campus is led by a female dean who reports to the university's male rector regarding most major administrative issues. Power in decision making is, therefore, limited on the women's campus. Additionally, the university's administration outlined work processes and organisational operations so that every member knows their rights and obligations. Interviews with administrators and faculty members suggested that the university's system is clear and organised. Every member knows their duties, obligations and what is expected from them, and the university's rules and regulations are clear to all members.

Clear Rules and Regulations

A leading administrator pointed out that all of the roles, duties and policies are well-explained to all members beginning at the days of orientation. In that regard, she stated, "We have explained our rules and policies in our faculty booklet so everyone will know their rights and duties" (AD2). She also indicated, "We welcome the newcomers. We explain the rules, the main policies and the newcomers' rights and places" (AD2). This reflects strong features of the bureaucratic organisational structure. Also, another administrator referenced the clarity of the university's rules, regulations and organisational structure in her interview by saying, "For projects, we have clear steps to follow" (AD6).

Teamwork

Teamwork among members also appeared to be valued and highlighted at the university. This was emphasised in interviews with many administrators and faculty members who pointed out that this is one of the major factors that contributes to the institution's success. A faculty member with a leading administrative position commented, "I think, also, as far as satisfaction, [we] have a good team. They work well together. We are still small enough to have this connection" (FM1). Moreover, another leading administrator stressed the teamwork that is evident in the university's environment by saying, "The teamwork is very high. The coordination between the administrations in the two campuses is very high. Our only problem is the communication; sometimes we don't know who we should talk to" (AD4).

Flexibility

While there are clear rules at the university, they were not reported to be restrictive or harsh in nature. Most of the interviewees, whether administrators or faculty members, suggested that there were high levels of flexibility in the university's management practices. This was highlighted many times and in numerous places throughout the interview process. For example, an administrator stated

"The flexibility of our management is really high. We had our administrator's policy in 2007, and since that, we have been editing the policies according to the workflow requirements. I find this flexibility is a very strong advantage of our work. The management take our opinions, suggestions and criticisms into account" (AD2).

Other administrators and faculty members pointed out that the university's system is highly flexible for students and employees as long as the level of flexibility does not conflict with the quality of the services that are provided. This is demonstrated in a statement by a faculty member and leading administrative position: "We have to follow academic regulations but have to keep in mind the ability to help" (AD5).

A high level of flexibility was reflected in relation to teaching methods, materials and examinations. Faculty members who participated in this research appeared to know their teaching duties (e.g., how to explain materials, how to use multiple teaching methods and how to use multiple testing methods). Most of the interviewed faculty members agreed that they have the freedom to choose teaching methods that suit their respective courses. For example a faculty member with an administration position stated

"There are times we have difficulties. Technology doesn't always work. But as I tell my faculty, you didn't have technology when you were teaching, so be resourceful if something happens. And [if] technology isn't going to work on [a] specific day, then do something else. You are teachers. You know how to educate without your PowerPoint" (FM1).

Another faculty member pointed out that she changed her teaching methods to suit students' needs which positively affected her students' engagement and grades (FM5). Agreeing with the previous point, another faculty member stated

"I prefer to be flexible with that. I really do. I try to foster [a] communicative approach. But it isn't like you have the same activities day after day. You find a way that works best for you and your students. What I think is best is you get

into your classroom. You get to know your students, and you know their learning styles. Then you need to adapt your teaching method” (FM1).

Most faculty members also asserted that they have authority to choose course material as long as it fits the courses’ outcome criteria. When new textbooks are introduced, administrative approval is needed and generally granted to faculty members. For example, a faculty member with an administrative position stated

“Let’s say a faculty member teaches the course for one or two semesters. Then she says, ‘This text book isn’t really working.’ Then we have a committee within the department. She would have to submit a proposal to change the textbook. We review. She has to give a suggestion. We review past textbooks. Then we review the recommended book [to see] if it’ll fit the course running outcomes” (FM1).

This aspect of the university’s system was referenced numerous times throughout interviews with faculty members. For example, a faculty member with a leading administrative position said, “We leave it open to the faculty member when it comes to teaching methods and material. They know there is a framework, and we don’t want to go beyond that framework. Within the framework, we give them flexibility” (FM2). Another faculty member emphasised the university’s encouragement to develop teaching quality by updating course materials, teaching methods and selecting textbooks to improve the quality of courses. In that regard, she stated, “I was asked if I want a new book, to suggest something or do I want carry on with the one we already have” (FM4). Another faculty member also pointed out the same thing indicating

“We have great freedom in choosing what to teach as long as we are, of course, aware of the whole program and the target. And Prince Sultan has a positive, a very good, positive attitude, which is the continuous development of the curriculum. So, I mean the curriculum development community, we are always involved in how we can take data from students, [their] feedback and what the problem is, and modifying problems and difficulties to the best. So, we are [involved in an] ongoing modification experience if you can say so” (FM3).

The flexibility and the open door policies (which are discussed later in this section) were frequently and positively referred to by research participants. Most of the university’s staff members who were interviewed agreed that the university has a high level of flexibility, which seemed to correlate positively with their working experiences and increased their level of comfort within the campus environment. Also, some students referred positively to the flexibility which they perceived in the university’s administration. For example, one student was fearful of taking exams and appreciated the university’s efforts to help address this issue by arranging for her to take exams in a separate room at the student affairs office. She commented that these efforts positively affected her grades and helped her with her challenges in taking exams. Other students also pointed out that they really appreciated the ability to access and leave the campus based upon their schedule without complications unlike other universities where a set dismissal time exists.

In contrast, a number of other students believed that the flexibility of the university’s administration was limited, especially with academic issues, such as teaching methods or course materials, which directly influenced their learning

outcomes. Examples that highlight this issue are included later in this chapter in the section on academic experience where students' experiences with flexibility at the university are discussed in more detail, with special attention to the example of the non- Arabic native speaking student who was required to take Arabic classes.

Students believed that the university could do more to become more flexible with its policies related to the transferring of credits from other institutions, textbook applicability to the Saudi market and in changing teaching and testing methods. These critical issues directly affected students' college experiences and appear worthy of additional attention and improvement. Some administrators suggested that the university needed to adapt to changes in the world related to education by being more flexible in its system of transferring credits such as accepting e-education credits or credits from online degrees. AD3 clearly referenced this limitation in flexibility in the following quote:

“The transfer students who come from other universities sometimes face difficulties in applying transfer credits. Our system has issues with the online courses and distance learning, and time is changing now. And we should be more flexible when dealing with such issues” (AD3).

Limitations in the Decision-Making Process

Faculty members' and students' involvement in the decision-making process seems to be limited to recommendations to higher management at the male campus. This was suggested by a number of faculty members and administrators during the interviews. For example, an administrator stated clearly, “We recommend. We don't get the final decision” (AD5). Another administrator clearly pointed out that, “The

decision maker is one person. It is a problem. I cannot do anything without the dean and rector's approval" (AD4).

Limitations of faculty members and administrators in decision-making processes reflect some degree of inflexibility in the university's organisational structure. The university's administrative system may not be as flexible as some of the administrators, faculty members and students indicated in the previous section. This observation was supported by an administrator stating

"Changing an existing regulation could prove challenging when there is a rule that needs to be modified. It needs to go through the proper channel starting from the college and university council. Then we have a proposal; most of the time it is a unified proposal between the deanship of administration and the registration of the men's section. The proposal will be addressed with the university council in order to be approved" (AD5).

Most changes or requests have to go through a lengthy review process and committee or council meetings before they become final. One administrator illustrated this by stating

"Decisions usually come from the committees and the councils. When I receive the decisions, we work on implementing them. Our office provides assistance, data, reports or documents. So, that is our part of making the decisions. But we have no authority in deciding" (AD2).

This reflects a high level of hierarchy and bureaucracy which correlates with the university's organisational chart that was analysed earlier in this chapter.

Analysis of the interviews as well as the university's official documents suggests that the administration's leadership could be classified as a top-down

management style. However, most of the interviewees believed that higher management generally listens to their needs and requests while respecting their input and recommendations. They also indicated that they usually obtain their request.

On the other hand, limitations to involvement in decision making were also highlighted during the interviews. The main concern of faculty members and administrators was the time involved and the delay in the management's approval for recommended changes. It was also noted that organisational policies often require the involvement of management in routine work which could be handled without the need for higher approval. In addition to a time-consuming decision-making process, interviewees claimed that multiple authority lines influence the quality of work by delaying and complicating their work quality and productivity. For example, an administrator stated

“The biggest negativity that I face is not being able to report directly to the director of our office who is in the male administration. It would be better if I was directly under his supervision. Sometimes when I receive instructions from him and from the dean of the female campus, I find myself under overlap. The paperwork also to be reviewed from both of them takes longer than what it is supposed to take. Besides that, the dean has many responsibilities and may not really understand the nature of our work unlike the male director who is specialised in our work and knows all about its details. So, it would be more beneficial to be directly under his supervision, and that would facilitate the work routine. Overlapping may cause lots of delay and confusion” (AD2).

Complications were also evident when important decisions are made by the highest management, a single person, who is not necessarily familiar with the details of each case or with the people involved. This was illustrated by an administrator who commented

“It is really a problem to have the decision maker of the campus a person who does not work in the campus and does not communicate with the people within the campus, and only one person who is the female dean of our campus who transforms or communicates” (AD4).

In summary, there were mixed views about the extent of flexibility at the university. This was brought out strongly when taking students' views into account. As discussed earlier in this section, flexibility at the university appeared when faculty members exercised their freedom to choose their own teaching methods and materials and when students reflected on some difficulties where flexibility was demonstrated, such as in the previous example in this chapter of the student who was exam-phobic. On the other hand, one major source of inflexibility may well be at the senior level, especially when most decisions come from the top management and administrators' responsibilities in decision making are limited to recommendations. Students also expressed some issues of inflexibility that affected their academic experiences, which is discussed later in the section on academic experience. This appeared to create tension that needed to be solved, especially when dealing with non-Arabic speaking and non-Muslim students.

Open Door Policy

In contrast with this mixed view, there was unanimity among both staff and students about the existence and value of an open door policy. Data from the interviews also suggested that all of the staff members who were interviewed perceived that senior staff members were concerned about listening to students, faculty members and administrators as they had adopted an open door policy. This was observed during the data collection period. The dean of the female campus reported that her office is always welcoming students and staff. She stated, “I have an open door policy. The students are welcome at any time” (AD1). She also commented, “So, what I do [is] I leave my doors open. I see the faculty. I see the students. And in between, I do some of the paperwork.”

One of the faculty members also claimed that she and her colleague also implemented the open door policy. She stated, “Whenever they have any issues, it’s [an] open door policy” (FM2). The open door policy was an important issue that was raised during the student interviews. Students valued and appreciated their ability to access any, and all, faculty members and administrators within the university to discuss problems and conflicts. Students also confirmed the open door policy that the university’s administration was adopting. One student stated

“They all have [an] open doors policy. You may go there [to] talk to them, and they all listen. We also have [a] phone guide [that] contains numbers for all directors and deans and [includes their] free time to contact [them]” (ST4).

This offers evidence of the open door policy that the university had adopted as one of its main features. Students also expressed their ability to freely reach the highest management on the male section of campus when needed. One student saw

this as a benefit indicating, “I really like this thing about our university; we can reach any person regardless of his/her position” (ST2). The previous students’ statements suggest that this aspect of the university empowers students and demonstrates value placed on students’ perspectives.

The student focus groups, comments from the dean and observations made by the researcher suggested that the male rector, who holds the highest management position at the university, also meets with female students each semester to listen to their needs, comments and complaints. Meetings with the dean and rector are generally limited to students so as to encourage free discussion of their experiences and concerns. For example, one student indicated, “Every year, there is a meeting between students and top management with no faculty member or instructors. We can complain about anything. We can speak directly to them” (ST4). These regular meetings suggest a high level of commitment and priority given to the students.

Although the administrative style seemed to reflect high levels of bureaucracy where clear rules and regulations are implemented and the decision-making process is valued, leaders’ personalities and leadership skills also appeared to influence the campus environment. Most of the interviewees commented about this, explaining that they had witnessed how varying personalities and leadership skills of different deans could make a significant difference within the university environment. This observation was made so frequently by interviewees that it appeared to merit particular attention.

One example that may be considered of interest within this research and which highlights how different administrative styles have influenced the environment at the women’s campus is evident from one of the interviewees, AD3, who had worked as

an administrator at the university since its founding. AD3 had the opportunity to work with three different administrators who each had responsibility for overseeing the female campus. She provided positive feedback about the leadership skills of some of the administrators, and offered criticism regarding the leadership of the other administration. AD3 claimed that one of the administrators respected the employees, listened to their feedback, sympathised with them, supported them and knew them personally. Conversely, other administrators had a very formal leadership style where faculty members were treated as machines. They were expected to obey orders from the dean and received no sympathy regarding their conditions and challenges.

AD3 suggested that the reason for the different administrative styles among these administrators was because one of them had a vision, was very emotionally intelligent and cared about people within the campus, while the other administrator was formal and strict in implementing rules regardless of people's emotions. AD3 felt that the different administrative styles might be attributed to differences in personalities and attitudes. However, she also highlighted that administrators' experiences and expertise can also play an important role. In her view, the first administrator had served for 11 years and knew how to lead, how to ask for resources and how to accomplish things for the institution, while the other administrator was academic, had no administrative experience and was inflexible in their leadership approach. The individual characteristics of these different administrators appeared to affect the manner in which they interacted with people and addressed issues and problems at the university.

AD3 emphasised that leaders' administrative styles not only influence people who work at the institution, but the students as well. Students witness differences

between leaders. AD3 reported that during one administrator's tenure, students raised many complaints to the rector, the highest management administrator at the university, because they felt neglected and that their opinion was not valued.

The influence of administrators' leadership skills on the campus environment was witnessed and reported by other research participants as well who confirmed similar issues, enabling some triangulation of this individual report. For example, one administrator pointed out that an administrator's leadership skills can affect work productivity either positively or negatively. This administrator stressed that during certain administrations, "We were miserable. We had not been given a space to be innovative. And the highest administrator didn't go along with her two vice deans" (AD6).

Students also commented about the higher administrators' different skills and behaviours, indicating that they strongly influenced their level of comfort within the university environment. For example, students stated

"We are used to reaching our dean easily. The doors are usually open. We had a very difficult time with certain administrations who pushed us away and were very difficult to reach. It is very different now. Our dean listens to us any time we need her" (ST2).

"My friend and I get really angry and mad when specific administrations neglect the official annual meeting where the dean meets with the students at the auditorium and discusses with us all the issues that concern us as students. Not valuing these official meetings which are considered to be a unique tradition of this university is unpleasant and disappointing" (ST9).

Data from this study suggest that one person can influence an entire institutional environment either positively or negatively. Whilst it can be argued that leaders require freedom of action, this is in tension with the dangers of an entire institution being controlled by one person who might have poor leadership and skills. Rather, it is essential that an institutional system should maintain the positive aspects of its style, values, principles and stability. It is not acceptable, and is at the same time very dangerous, that a whole institution's environment, vision, and system might be ruined by the poor leadership skills of one person. The widely-felt sense that a particular leader had a damaging effect on the institution's practices suggests that there may be a need for a review of relevant aspects of the institution's governance to make it less likely that such a situation could recur, an issue returned to in the conclusion.

While the research suggests that the university's system is highly bureaucratic, interviewees expressed some positive perceptions in that regard. They believed that some level of firmness is supportive of the university's operational system. The clarity of policies, regulations and well-organised plans had a positive influence on their experiences. Students and staff agreed that the requirement to be familiar with regulations and policies raised their awareness of their duties and obligations. Students also seemed to be positively influenced by the organised mechanisms of their classes and the registration process. In a sense, this helped them to be more organised. In that regard, an administrator stated, "It is necessary to have bureaucracy. People want to be protected and not be blamed. Bureaucracy clears the responsibilities" (AD3).

In contrast, the bureaucracy of the university's organisational structure and the hierarchy that was strongly embodied within the system appeared to have other negative impacts. These issues were mentioned by research participants and seemed to negatively influence their experiences. Multiple lines of authority, the requirement for signatures from several leaders and the firmness of regulations with minimum exceptions were all features that affected the productivity of work, as well as created difficulties for students and staff. For example, students transferring from other institutions faced many challenges, such as a difficulty in transferring their qualified credits by needing to go through many offices and waiting long periods to get their credit hours transferred. Time consumption and overlapping orders were the main issues that seemed to negatively influence the productivity and creativity of the work environment within the selected university.

It is essential to highlight some of the efforts by the university's administration to ease negative influences of the institution's bureaucratic structure on students and staff. The university's upper management demonstrated a commitment to addressing the concerns of students, and students were encouraged to meet with the dean and male rector whenever they needed. Two annual meetings were held between students and the male rector to discuss students' difficulties with courses, university faculty and any issues that affected students. The confidentiality of these meetings and the rector's commitment to listen to students demonstrated, in the view of the students, the value that was placed on student involvement and voice, and represented a collegial aspect of the university's organisational structure.

The previous arguments suggest that the university's administrative style is bureaucratic and collegial in nature. This is reflected in high levels of bureaucracy

embodied within the top-down management style where clear rules and regulations are implemented and involvement in decision making is limited to higher authority and management. Additionally, work processes and organisational operations appeared to be valued.

Meanwhile, high levels of flexibility in the university's management practices, teamwork among members, the open door policy and the value placed on university members' voices and opinions were all important features that were strongly embodied within the university's system, demonstrating the collegial nature of the university's organisational structure. Freedom for faculty members to choose their teaching methods and curriculum also illustrates one of the positive collegial features of the university's system which may not be as apparent in other universities in Saudi Arabia and which also reflects a certain level of freedom and independence for faculty members that is encouraged by the university's administration. Nonetheless, as noted previously in this section, frustration expressed by some of the participants regarding inflexibility in decision-making processes at the university illustrates a negative bureaucratic aspect within the university's structure.

It is important to note that bureaucratic features found from the interviews correlated with bureaucratic features that were explored during the first phase of this research. This strengthens the validity of the classification of the university's organisational structure under the framework of the bureaucratic model.

The following section discusses students' academic experiences that were explored in this research.

Academic Experience

This research used students' perceptions in regard to their academic experiences at PSU as an indicator of their satisfaction level with their college experiences. This section provides a discussion of students' academic experiences within the university.

Generally, students seemed comfortable with their college experiences and expressed overall satisfaction with the services provided by the university. Students' perceptions regarding their academic experiences were mixed, with both positive and negative feelings described by interviewees. Some students felt that although the university works hard to maximise academic benefits, it is unable to fulfil all of their expectations.

Students expressed some issues regarding the connection of theory in their studies to real life cases. During one of the interviews, students described a time where professional speakers from the financial sector were invited to discuss issues about the Saudi market. Students commented, "We had an event two weeks ago, we invited professionals from financial sectors to talk about finance and the Saudi market; it was very useful" (ST5). In that regard, students suggested a need to move beyond memorisation of theory to an approach that integrates the learning of theory with real-life projects where studied theory could be applied and challenged.

Another important point raised by the students was related to the curriculum for some of the classes. Students claimed that some of the courses' textbooks have a western (American) influence and are presented to serve the American market. Students felt that they needed to learn more about the Saudi market and how to address relevant issues so they were prepared for work life after graduation. Students

claimed that a western focus in the curriculum contributed to ignorance regarding Saudi market needs, background, values and demands and caused some conflict in relation to some of the issues that face the Saudi domestic financial market. For example, one student stated

“The courses we are taught aren’t revised. We study American regulations as if we are living in the U.S. but nothing about financial regulations here in Saudi Arabia. Once I work, I’ll be the one googling to understand regulations in Saudi Arabia. Why don’t they teach us regulations here so we can be prepared for the job market?” (ST1).

Another student raised the same concern, commenting

“Most of our law teachers are Egyptian, Algerian or Jordanian who teach us their country law by giving us practical examples that are applied in their own country. They aren’t fully aware of the Saudi law and don’t have any experience about Saudi law” (ST7).

“All books are based on U.S. curriculum disregarding Saudi student’s majority. We try to connect to reality in Saudi Arabia through self-searching and learning” (ST7).

Students understood that there might be a lack of Saudi publications that deal with their studies. However, they suggested inviting expert speakers from the Saudi market, such as Saudi lawyers and Saudi financial investors, to help them to connect their studies to real life situations.

Students did not appear to devalue or underestimate the importance of studying western laws and its financial systems. Many students expressed ambitions to study abroad and acknowledged the need for further understanding of these topics. At the same time, students expressed a desire to learn about the Saudi laws and financial regulations in greater depth and to connect that to western theory and practices so they could be valued more in their professional lives and increase their chances of finding proper jobs. According to students, they felt that this would enrich and balance their academic experiences and preparation for future careers inside the Kingdom, correlating with cultural values and expectations.

It is important to note that the issue of students thinking of working overseas did not appear during the interviews. The reason seems to be that working overseas for Saudi women is rare and unfamiliar in the Saudi culture. There might be some exceptions, but this is misaligned with the Saudi cultural mainstream. This may be due, in part, to cultural traditions and religious concerns which emphasise the value of family such as strong bonds to parents, husbands and children. Another potential reason which was observed may be related to financial issues. For example, currently in Saudi Arabia, women depend on males (e.g., fathers, brothers and husbands) as financial providers.

These reports of a lack of concern for Saudi business law were quite striking in a cultural environment that is strongly Saudi-based, especially given that much Saudi business law is influenced by Islamic beliefs and values. An exploration of the full reasons for this are beyond the scope of this thesis, but, as referred to in some of the comments above, this may possibly indicate the dominance of particular business

perspectives internationally, reflected though available textbooks. As implied above, the nationality of the teachers may also be a factor.

Students also had some issue with teaching methods. Some students claimed that most of the teaching methods and coursework are based on lecturing and memorising with minimum attention to students' involvement in classroom activities. They believed that increased classroom involvement would be beneficial and enrich their academic experiences. One student commented, "We are never expected to think because we are always supposed to memorise and fill in blanks" (ST4).

Students also suggested that teaching methods should be adapted to enrich their academic experiences as well as indicated the need for more information regarding the current Saudi market. In that regard, students stated

"Memorising alone isn't going to help us in professional life" (ST3).

"I remember in one course last semester, the instructor asked us to divide ourselves in several groups. Each group was asked to prepare one part of one chapter for presentation. This helped us read. I remember not only the part I was asked to prepare, but all other parts too. It was fun to do it" (ST7).

The previous quotes suggest that students benefit more from active teaching methods where they are involved rather than simply being recipients of information that is to be memorised. Students believed that such changes would increase the practicality of their programmes and would enrich their learning experiences.

Most students who participated in the focus groups felt satisfied with the courses and considered the assignment loads to be manageable. However, they had some concerns that instructors did not emphasise being prepared for upcoming classes and that they were never asked to read material prior to class time. This is well-expressed in one of the student's comments:

“The culture of reading isn't supported. Students rely more on slides and don't bother reading books. I feel when you read the book, you understand the concept so much more than just going through slides. I used to read books. Now I'm involved in this 'slides' culture. I don't bother” (ST5).

The previous comment that was raised from ST5 offers an interesting insight into the apparent influence of the institution's behaviours on students' experiences. Motivating students to learn, using different teaching approaches and pushing them to do more and maximise their efforts are all behaviours that might be expected from the university toward their students. These kinds of behaviours were often absent based on students' claims and reports, which clearly had a negative influence on their learning experiences. It seems possible that bureaucracy, with its emphasis on process clarity and hierarchy, as noted in PSU's system, places some limitations on the variety of teaching methods and forms of assessment, resulting in students' low levels of excitement in studying most of their classes. Moreover, the previous statement shows that some students would love to have more challenging learning approaches. In that regard, students reported a unique experience with an instructor who involved them in an active learning process where they were asked to read, prepare and present. Students were delighted to have such an experience and reported positively in the following manner:

“I remember in one course last semester, the instructor asked us to divide ourselves in several groups. Each group was asked to prepare one part of one chapter for presentation. This helped us read. I remembered not only the part I was asked to prepare, but all other parts too. It was fun to do it” (ST7).

Apparently, students’ disappointment with some aspects of their academic experiences with its less challenging teaching and testing methods and the absence of critical thinking is in clear conflict with the Saudi government’s educational policy which focuses on increasing the quality of education (see chapter 3). However, this issue of low levels of motivation by students to learn and to develop greater intellectual skills is worth further investigation for future research in order to discover the root of these challenges. This research does not provide answers to these issues which could be linked to culture, structure, education or the presence of a teacher-centred ethos.

Students were very positive when it came to the university’s efforts to organise classes and enforce early registration periods to avoid conflicts with courses and exams. Students also expressed their appreciation of the university’s administration and its efforts to facilitate the registration process and to cooperate in cases of conflict or difficulties. Students claimed that the organised procedures implemented by the university to ensure a smooth registration and enrolment period helped them to be more organised and committed in their studies and taught them how to manage their schedules. One of the students highlighted this point by stating

“At the beginning of semester, we are given a plan with all final exam dates and so on. For me, I learned time management from it because of deadlines all

noted down on the plan. It is the policy here in the university to sign the plan” (ST1).

Overall, students agreed that their academic experiences depend largely on the course instructors. Two students (ST4 and ST9) took this view. One of them stated, “Honestly, a good instructor can make you love the course, but a bad instructor can make you hate it” (ST9). The majority of students (11 students out of 16) claimed that when instructors know how to effectively deliver a course, students’ overall satisfaction with the courses increases, while the opposite is true for ineffective instructors.

Tutoring and study groups appear to be strongly emphasised and supported by the university. A student reported that this feature helps her to sharpen her social skills. She stated, “We have a lot of group projects that sometimes require us to meet with students we have not been working with before, and this influences our social experience” (ST9). Students with high performance in some classes are recommended to tutor students who have weaknesses or difficulties and are given a financial reward from the university’s administration for their assistance. An administrator explained, “We have a tutoring centre. And they pay the students who tutor other students” (AD4). Students expressed that in addition to positive academic benefits that come from study groups and tutoring, social benefits also result from these activities. One student commented

“We usually study in the library and sit in groups and help each other even if we are not friends. And it helps us socially. Yeah, that helps me a lot socially. I witness a difference. Even my family witnesses a change within my personality. I was very shy and became more active and un-shy” (ST11).

This perhaps reflects the university's efforts to involve students in many activities and to make their experiences more beneficial and enjoyable.

Students also suggested that the small university campus has a positive influence on both their academic and social experiences. On an academic level, students described the positive aspects of studying in small classes where instructors know and understand each student's weaknesses, strengths and needs. Small classes appeared to facilitate contact with the teachers as well as other students and seemed to have a positive effect on students' experiences. The following quote from a student illustrates the positive nature of the small university campus:

“[The] university here is smaller, and we know each other. If I am in [a] class of 70 students, I will not be noticed, neither heard. PSU is as big as a school. We are all together. It feels like a big family” (ST5).

In sum, students expressed mixed perceptions regarding their academic experiences at PSU. There was wide support for a number of aspects of teaching and pastoral support that were believed to enhance students' experiences. However, students perceived some variation in the quality of teaching, which is an issue that might warrant further attention. Positive and negative perceptions, reported and discussed earlier, suggest that the university should take students' inputs more seriously in order to achieve their mission of providing excellent academic experience to their students.

Social Experience

The social experiences of students that were explored in this research illustrate many important features that played important roles in shaping students' college

experiences. The open door policy, sense of community, social non-academic extracurricular activities, strong social commitment, multicultural campus environment and small campus size are all factors that appeared to influence interviewees' social experiences. Each of these aspects is discussed in further detail below.

Open Door Policy

The open door policy was strongly emphasised by university leaders and appeared to influence social aspects of the university. While the open door policy was previously discussed in the administrative style section, it is also relevant to this section because of its influence on students' social experiences. Students appreciated the ability to reach all faculty members and administrators in order to discuss a range of issues. This easy access to faculty members and administrators created a welcoming environment and encouraged students to reach out whenever needed. This also provided students with opportunities to discuss difficult and private situations that might not be appropriate to discuss in classroom settings. It also gave classroom instructors and administrators the chance to get to know students in person. These aspects enhanced communication between faculty members, administrators and students, thus enriching the social experiences of them all.

Sense of Community

Interviews with administrators, faculty members and students suggested a strong sense of community and focus on the well-being of others among university's members. Most people expressed a strong sense of belonging and satisfaction with the

university's culture and environment. This was emphasised during an interview with one of the administrators when she was asked if she felt a sense of community within the college. She indicated

“Yes, I do very much so. It is like my second home or maybe my first. You have this sense of belonging, this family that gets created amongst your faculty, your students. It is when my students graduate, I'm on the stage crying” (FM1).

Social Non-Academic Extracurricular Activities

Overall, students seemed to be impressed and satisfied with their social involvement at the university. They enjoyed events and extracurricular activities offered by the university. Students agreed that the university supported and funded many activities such as student-run clubs, national and international conferences, workshops for students and many other activities that students perceived to be enriching and valuable to their experiences. In that regard, one student stated, “We love the social life within the university. But I think because of our school background where we have a diverse community and students from many countries, we become very accepting of the university's social environment” (ST11).

Social Commitment

Interviews with administrators and students suggested that the university seems to have a strong social commitment as demonstrated by the services it offers to students and the community. The university has an active community service office where students are offered many opportunities to develop their social and academic

skills. The community service office claimed that they provide a comprehensive experience for students throughout their college years where students can become involved in many events and activities that enable them to serve the community as well as enrich and develop their personal and professional skills. In that regard, a leading administrator stated, “We don’t want to be a boring university setting only for studies, teaching and learning. A university should have positive effects on communities” (AD6).

Another example of involving students in charity events was the university’s efforts to help women with limited incomes by training them to use computers or by teaching them English as a second language. This was described by one of the administrators, who stated, “PSU students are taught courses alongside the experience they gain. They have the chance to earn friends and understand more about community problems” (AD6).

Thus, PSU focuses not only on academic knowledge and degree attainment, but also on preparing students mentally and emotionally for their future careers. This suggests a strong sense of community within the campus and a commitment to students’ success within the community following graduation.

Multicultural Aspect

In light of the definitions of multicultural organisations offered in chapter 4, a particular focus of this section was to examine claims regarding PSU’s multicultural environment that were reported in this research and to analyse participants’ inputs.

Interviews with administrators suggested that the culture of PSU’s campus was often described as a multicultural environment. Therefore, the extent of respect

placed on religious and cultural differences among colleagues was of interest. The multicultural aspect of PSU's campus was raised with many research participants who seemed to be positively influenced by this feature. For example, an administrator stated

“Most of our advantage is the multicultural community here at PSU. You can meet faculty and administrators from all over the world. Once you deal with such a multicultural community, you find it varied and enjoyable. It is a very enriching environment” (AD2).

The multicultural feature seems to be implemented on campus through a widespread belief that high levels of respect are given to individuals regardless of whether they are Saudi and/or Muslim or represent other backgrounds. This was clearly stated by a leading administrator:

“We are a multicultural institution, and we respect others' faith and religion. We have non-Muslim students and non-Muslim faculty. Some of our non-Muslim faculty has been working with us for a long time, and their kids study in this university. We also have students from foreign embassies. This is an English language institute. This is why it became multicultural” (AD1).

For a number of interviewees, the acceptance of diversity appeared to positively affect and enrich people on the campus. This was strongly emphasised during AD2's and AD1's previous statements as well as by other participants who believed that such a multicultural environment influences them positively by enriching their experiences and giving them opportunities to explore and learn about different cultures.

The previous data raise substantial questions about the meaning of multiculturalism in the context of this university. Features highlighted by research participants regarding the multicultural nature of the university seemed to lack depth and may not necessary reflect an extended interpretation of multiculturalism.

For example, in her above statement, AD2 suggested that having faculty members and administrators from different countries and cultural backgrounds by itself reflects an aspect of a multicultural campus. This might be true if faculty members from other cultures and countries expressed and practiced their values and cultural beliefs openly and freely. This is not the case at PSU where Islam is the dominant religion and Saudi cultural values are strongly emphasised. In the case of PSU, faculty members from other countries and cultures might be classified as a minority in an otherwise homogeneous culture where they are expected to follow the roles of the dominant culture. The same argument or tension appeared when AD1 claimed that PSU respects others' faith and religion. Statements such as this may not be entirely accurate since PSU is a Saudi Muslim institution that follows policies outlined by the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education such as requiring all students to take Islamic and Arabic language courses regardless of their religion or native language. The case of the non-Muslim student that will be discussed later in this section as well as the case of the non-Arabic speaking student who took the mandatory Arabic course demonstrates a lack of flexibility and in some sense negates the university's claim of being a multicultural institution. The general policy in Saudi Arabia regarding the Saudi higher educational system, which was described in depth in chapter 3, prohibits any public practice of other religions other than Islam. Therefore, AD1's statement suggests that members of different religions must respect

the country's policy of not practicing or discussing their religious beliefs in public. This reflects a low level of social and cultural integration within the university's campus and emphasises the concept of one dominant cultural stream. Other social aspects, such as dressing codes and Saudi cultural values, seem to be highlighted on campus. The dressing code is standard and clear, with everybody being required to follow the guidelines. To this point, a leading administrator stated, "We have strict codes for everybody. They have to wear the abaya and scarf when leaving the university. In the campus, they have to take off the abaya. We don't allow wearing pants unless it is a PE class" (AD1).

The previous statement suggests that the university's culture is homogenous especially when it comes to roles and policies reflected in Saudi society such as the requirement for all people living in the country to follow certain dress codes. For example, the statement by AD1 indicating that there are "strict codes" that outline what people need to wear reveals a homogenous setting and embodies one of the main features outlined by Cox (1991) of a monolithic organisation where strength, power and control of the majority overrule that of the minority. Cox's definition conflicts with the university's claim of having a multicultural environment and illustrates limitations to their assertion. AD1 also felt that cultural differences among people within the university are respected and commented

"We respect the cultural and religion differences among our staff and people, and we don't force anything onto anyone. They are also very respectful of our cultural values and religious beliefs, and we never had an issue with such a thing. Our non-Muslim students or faculty are very respectful to our customs

and cultural values, and they really know them. So, we don't have an issue with this issue.”

The statement by the previous administrator (AD1), a Saudi Muslim leader, reveals an interesting point. AD1 stated that the campus has high levels of respect for different cultures and religions while national policy related to Saudi higher education and the country in general prohibits any activities or religious celebrations by religions other than Islam. Therefore, the respect that the university claimed to have is limited to a level where they do not force the minority to participate in Islamic activities or celebrations.

Meanwhile, the previous statement conflicts with an awareness of cultural differences, respect and value which have been outlined as aspects of a multicultural campus by various researchers (Cuyjet et al., 2011; Pope et al., 2004). The conflict is manifest when everyone, including the minority, is forced to follow the country's dress codes and is required to respect and accept aspects of the Saudi culture. This may negatively influence the perspective of some members of the minority in their views toward their working environment where the dominant culture controls the environment and establishes the rules. This negative influence could possibly be manifest in silence by the minority as reflected in a hesitation to discuss any cultural or religious issues. This, therefore, may detract from the multicultural nature of an institution when the minority adapt to the dominant cultural environmental style in order to survive as Cox (1991) described in his monolithic organisation. Hesitancy to discuss these issues may have led to gaps in the data for this study, with some participants withholding information. It could, however, be argued that this analysis

privileges the desirability of diversity on a culture that may also derive social benefits from its coherence, some of which are commented on by students later in this chapter.

According to Astin (1993a), diversity can contribute positively to students' learning experiences by exposing them to other cultures, thus increasing their cultural awareness, personal commitment, political liberalism and satisfaction with their college experiences. Astin also claimed that the positive effects of college diversity not only contribute to student outcomes but also support the goal of general education. Astin asserted that having faculty members with various backgrounds enriches the diversity of the university's culture by producing a strong and culturally aware environment and increases students' overall satisfaction with the college experience. Astin pointed out that the benefits and positive outcomes of diversity could be achieved if diversity is clearly articulated and implemented which is not the case at PSU.

PSU reflects limitations in diversity and multiculturalism that restrict the development of skills that are needed for multicultural organisations such as political liberalism, cultural awareness as well as the valuing of minorities. On the student level, 12 Saudi Muslim students and 4 non-Saudi Muslim students described no issues with the influence of Islamic/Saudi cultures at the college. They felt that this is part of their lives, and they did not view it as an issue. One student commented about the announcement of prayer time by indicating, "It is very regular. It would be weird if they didn't give the time to do our prayers" (ST7). Another student explained the strong influence of Islamic values in Saudi society and culture by stating

"Everyone in Saudi Arabia respects the cultural and religious values. The university is committed. We have to wear the abaya when we leave the

university, and the university's break always respects the praying time. There is a praying area, and students distribute praying mats everywhere in case we are located far from the praying area" (ST11).

Another student made a similar point, stating, "This is very normal for us that the university is very strict to have the break from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. to have lunch and give us the opportunity to do the afternoon prayer" (ST9).

Islamic values also appeared to be strongly emphasised and highly visible at the university. For example, praying time is held during lunch break, and the Athan (Islamic call for prayer) is announced and heard throughout campus. This suggests value placed on the Islamic culture within the campus and a sense of belonging to the Islamic community. Similarly, an administrator stated

"Here is part of the Saudi culture as a whole. The dressing code here is following the Islamic culture. We are considered to be less strict than other campuses, but we still value our Islamic beliefs and values. It is a multicultural environment, and we respect the differences among the people" (AD4).

The previous statement reveals some tension in relation to Islamic values that are strongly embodied within the Saudi culture as a whole and in part within PSU. As discussed previously in chapter 1, PSU is a Saudi university that follows the mission and policies outlined by the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education. PSU also belongs to a traditional culture where restrictions, rituals, values and privacy are important components of the Saudi culture.

The previous statement also suggests that PSU's campus is less strict than other campuses in Saudi Arabia. To illustrate, female students are not required to cover their faces when leaving PSU's campus, thus leaving it to personal preference

while they must wear the abaya and cover their hair when leaving the campus. This is unlike what is happening in other public universities. Having such a policy demonstrates that PSU supports the country's main dress code while still being flexible in regards to some aspects. Covering (or not) faces for women in Saudi Arabia is a subject that could be difficult for outsiders to fully comprehend due to uniqueness of the Saudi traditions, composed of social and religious values.

The previous statement also illustrates that PSU values Islamic beliefs as demonstrated through the implementation of the head covering, the teaching of Islamic courses and the policy for prayer breaks during the day; yet, features of multiculturalism should be consistent with Islamic values in order to be implemented and practiced on campus. This notion could be challenged as the meaning of multiculturalism, as defined in chapter 4, requires accepting different beliefs, values, practices and religions, suggesting that some of the features of multiculturalism may conflict with Islamic beliefs as practiced at PSU. It is worth mentioning that tensions between multiculturalism and Islamic values as practiced at PSU may not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of the relationship between Islam and multiculturalism. This is due to the fact that Islamic beliefs respect freedom, fairness and humanity regardless of a person's colour, nationality, race or religion. (See chapter 3 for a further discussion of this topic.) Tensions between the implementation of Islamic values and multiculturalism at PSU do not necessarily stem from Islam being unable to reflect multiculturalism; rather, this tension might be associated with the manner in which Islamic values are implemented at PSU.

As commented on earlier in the discussion of diversity, most, if not all, of the interviewees believed that the application of Islamic values on campus positively

impacts the university by spreading and teaching common ethics that are intended to be shared among different cultures and backgrounds. A faculty member who also holds a leading administrative position stated

“The implication of the Islamic values within the campus teaches ethics. The most important thing, forget about religion, if we just talk about all religions, all religions, they have some common points, don’t they? As a person, you should be pleasant. You should have [a] positive attitude. You should have to follow within the boundaries. Whether you are Christian, Hindu or a Muslim, it doesn’t matter. What we believe, we believe in ethical values” (FM2).

FM2’s statement highlights the main aspects of Islamic ethics and values which embody respect toward others regardless of differences. At the same time, such a statement may not be entirely accurate and does not agree with the other statements that have been discussed in this section in regard to the strict implementation of dress codes that represent Muslim beliefs as well as a strong homogenous culture that represents the cultural mainstream. FM2’s statement suggests that differences among people’s religions do not conflict with or limit their socialisation. This might be because most people, regardless of their religions and ethnicities, agreed on the same general ethics such as being honest, loyal and having positive attitudes. However, this statement may show that it could be difficult for non-Muslim students or staff to express their religious opinions freely and to practice their faith publicly. This appears to be a major limitation of multiculturalism in an institution since those in the minority may hesitate to say or do anything that is contrary to the cultural mainstream or that conflicts with Islamic belief.

Another major factor that appeared to be a limitation of a multicultural environment at PSU was the implementation of political power to enforce certain rules in the organisation such as mandatory Islamic and Arabic courses. Islamic and Arabic courses are taught at the university and considered to be mandatory for all students who seek bachelor certificates from Saudi universities. Administrators reported that for non-native speakers, Islamic courses have been modified and are offered in English. The teaching of Islamic and Arabic courses represents the identity of the Saudi culture as an Arabic Muslim society. This was explained by a leading administrator who stated

“Currently, we have two non-Muslim students and many non-Arab students whom don’t cause any issues. But for non-Muslims, they have to take Islamic courses and Arabic courses for non-Arabic speakers. Now, we give Islamic classes in English for non-Arabs. But for non-Muslims, mainly there is no issue because all the Islamic courses we teach don’t require the student to be Muslim. They teach fundamentals of the religion and the understanding of it as well as manners in Islam. The only issue is with the Quran class where the student has to memorise parts of the Quran. It was proposed last year by the teacher offering this course for those two students not to take this part of memorisation, instead to study the translation for the Quran Verse “Mary.” Probably they’ll have to deal with this case more frequently in the future since we’ll be having more non-Muslim students. So, there should be more proposals and suggestions” (AD5).

Although the university claimed that they modify Islamic and Arabic courses for non-Muslim students and those who are non-Arabic speakers, interviews with

some participants suggested that there may be some tension in this regard. For example, a student who does not speak Arabic pointed out that she faced difficulties with the mandatory Arabic class by stating

“I do nothing in the Arabic class. It is just for attendance. To examine and grade me in Arabic, the instructor gave me a handout which was Google translated in English. It is really bad, and I’ve showed them to all my colleagues. So, I had to write it using the same words, badly translated words, because she keeps the “Google translated” version next to her and uses it to grade what I write. Considering that I’m not the only non-Arabic student in here, there is good body of non-Arabic speakers in the university now” (ST3).

An additional tension was suggested by one of the non-Muslim Arabic students who refused to register for the mandatory Islamic course. The university’s administration claimed that they tried to help this student. One of the administrators stated

“I tried to explain to her that these courses are required by the Ministry of Higher Education and they are applied in all universities in the Kingdom. I also tried to explain that she doesn’t have to be a Muslim or have to become one. These are merely general information courses about the Islamic faith. Even though she wasn’t happy, it was out of my power to do anything. Again, this is part of the plan and unless the ministry issues some kind of an exemption, which I don’t think will happen soon, all students must take those courses” (AD5).

The subjects of the Saudi culture and the Islamic values were very interesting and complex in this study. The university presented itself as a multicultural campus

where many nationalities and religions coexist with no complications or problems. At the same time, however, it was not a secular or free campus as there were many noticeable implications of the Islamic religion and Saudi culture that members of the university, whether students or staff, were required to tolerate. This may not have been an issue for Saudi, Arab or Muslim students who believe that Islamic practice is part of their lives and embody this within their daily routines. Similarly, the extent to which the campus is multicultural may not have been as obvious an issue in interviews since the campus only had two non-Muslim students and a very limited number of non-Arabic native speaking students. Even then, this research revealed cases of students who are non-Arabic native speakers or non-Muslim and who refuse to attend mandatory Islamic and Arabic courses. At the time of data collection, the number of students in this category was small. Therefore, this may not be a persistent issue at the university. However, with potential increases in student numbers as well as other relevant factors such as westernised curriculums and the possible adoption of English as the main language at PSU, these factors might render a need for further examination of this issue. Retaining a traditional approach could negatively affect the university's international ranking and accreditation.

Issues such as those discussed have the potential to create many conflicts, especially with the coexistence of diverse student populations. It is important to note that the issue of non-Muslim and non-Arabic speaking students seemed to be minor at the time of data collection because of low numbers of students represented by these categories. Such factors may have negatively influenced students' levels of satisfaction with their college experiences and appear to be in tension with the university's claim to be a multicultural institution. These factors also illustrate the

extensive power that the Ministry of Higher Education exercises over Saudi universities. This reflects important features of a political organisational structure which emphasises power among leading members.

Influence of Campus Size

PSU's small campus appeared to have a positive influence on students' and faculty members' social experiences at the university. The small size of the campus was frequently raised and discussed during the interviews. Faculty members personally knew their students and had direct contact with them. One faculty member stated, "So, you have very direct contact with students. You know them by name; you know their traits, their learning capabilities. So, this is very important. Compared to very large public universities, where there are 60 students per class" (FM2). This statement suggests that the small women's campus at PSU encourages close contact between students and faculty members.

Faculty members also claimed that they were familiar with students' learning capabilities and difficulties and were able to provide support when needed. One faculty member described a student who experienced difficulty with taking exams. This student was referred to a specialist to help address these challenges so that her grades were not impacted. This faculty member stated, "I have some students that are really hyper. I mean there is a problem. They can't concentrate. So, I ask them to go to student affairs" (FM4).

The ability to notice personal issues or difficulties like the case in the previous example appears to highlight a caring and nurturing environment which represents features of the collegial model. Faculty members' efforts to help and support students,

their close interaction with students especially in times of need and encouragement given to students to attend academic and non-academic extracurricular activities represent main features of the collegial model.

This section examined issues that potentially influenced interviewees' social experiences at PSU. For example the open door policy, a sense of community, social non-academic extracurricular activities, a strong social commitment and the small campus size are all important aspects of the university that appeared to influence students' college experiences in many different ways by enhancing feelings of belonging to the university as well as enriching the social experiences of students, faculty members and administrators. Overall, research participants suggested a comfortable, positive, friendly and welcoming feeling reflected within the university environment.

On the other hand, this section also revealed serious tensions in regards to the university's claim of being a multicultural institution. This is an issue that apparently influenced the college experiences of some students who did not belong to the homogenous culture that was reflected by the university which emphasised Islamic and Saudi cultural values. Students who belonged to the majority (i.e., Muslim, Arabic native speaker) might not face difficulties or witness tension; however, minority students (i.e., non-Muslim, non-native Arabic speakers) reported some issues that negatively influenced their college experiences. In order to maximise the university's social and academic benefits, this issue needs serious consideration from the university's administration and policymakers to avoid difficulties and to achieve the university' mission and goals of "delivering and providing students with unique

high quality education to the highest international standards” (Prince Sultan University, 2015c).

Functional Experience

This section of the analysis illustrates functions of the facilities provided by the university for students, faculty members and administrators. Functions of the university’s facilities such as maintenance, labs, Internet access, building accessibility, food and coffee play important roles in shaping students’ experiences by influencing the quality and degree of student involvement in social and academic activities on campus. More convenient and supportive campus environments attract students and encourage them to stay on campus and become involved in extracurricular activities (Berger & Milem, 2000). This research suggests that the university provides its staff and students with excellent building facilities and supplies.

Another functional feature that was used in coding during data analysis was the opportunity for career development (e.g., training sessions, conference attendance). This feature was frequently mentioned by interviewees, so it appeared to merit particular attention. Faculty members and administrators reported that they were required to attend conferences (national and international) and workshops that were funded by the college in order to help them develop their teaching and administrative skills. For example, a faculty member with an administrative position stated

“We just recently had two doctors who used to be at Kings. They were here and gave a lecture and a series of workshops over a period of three days. One of the doctors mainly was talking about technology as a way to enhance the whole teaching process, and looking at it from a different perspective and how

to think about things. It was really interesting and gave the faculty who were able to attend the workshops a lot of ideas” (FM1).

This noticeable effort to encourage employees to attend national and international conferences as well as other university workshops suggests a commitment by the university to professional development.

Students did not articulate any problems with the university’s functions and facilities such as access to the buildings, the Internet, food courts and coffee. Students indicated a positive attitude toward the university’s efforts to improve the facilities within the campus and expressed appreciation regarding efforts to make it more comfortable and suitable for them. Students negatively perceived the prices of textbooks and the limited availability of required books in the university’s library in cases where they wanted to borrow them when unable to purchase them.

Research Results

Through data analysis of the interview transcripts and collected documents as well as through a connection of the data to the literature, research conclusions were drawn that respond to the research questions (see Table 6.1 in chapter 6 for an outline of the organisational models).

The first part of data analysis suggests that the university’s organisational structure reflects many features of the bureaucratic model as well as the collegial model. Meanwhile, the second part of data analysis supported main findings of the first part by recognising many features of the bureaucratic and collegial models. The second part of analysis also revealed limited features of the political model and the

symbolic model, which are explored below. Research results did not indicate any features of the systematic model within the university.

The bureaucratic organisational structure of the university was embodied in its formal, top-down leadership style and the clear mechanisms defining employees' work. The clarity of roles, responsibilities, rules, scope of authority and expectations among all of the university members, students and employees; the limitations surrounding decision-making involvement to the top leaders; and the valuing of operational procedures and processes are all features that highlight the hierarchy within the university system and the high level of bureaucracy. Dopson and McNay (2000) and McNay (1995) suggested that bureaucratic structures provide people with equal opportunities as well as security and stability within the organisational environment. This aspect was also reflected in the university as its members had clear responsibilities and stability in their roles.

Meanwhile, the collegial organisational structure was also well-presented in the university. This was manifested in the social orientation of the university where Islamic values and Saudi traditions were highlighted, in the caring and nurturing environment that was emphasised throughout the interviews, and in the strong sense of community that interviewees agreed exists on campus. More specifically, the constant encouragement of academic development as well as the valuing of the open communication between students, faculty and organisation members are all factors that distinguish collegial universities (Bergquist, 1992) and are evident at PSU.

Although there is little sign of overt political tension, various features that were identified show that the political organisational structure had some influence on the university's organisational structure and leadership style. The only features of the

political organisational structure that were evident in this research were competition and consistent efforts (Berger & Milem, 2000) to improve the university's teaching quality, facilities and services as well as the initiatives taken to obtain and maintain international accreditations and to improve university ratings among other universities.

One of the main features of the political organisational structure is the presence of power conflicts when disagreements occur (Berger & Milem, 2000; Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Morgan, 2006). This research did not identify any implications of power conflicts among university members. That might be because the system has been established, and members implement their work following orders, regulations and policies without questioning. Very little political disagreement was voiced.

Data analysis from this study suggested a possible influence by the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education on organisational practices at PSU. The relationship of the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education with the country's universities is characterised by forceful pressure to follow policies outlined by the ministry. As discussed earlier, it is important to note that the exercise of power and control are considered to be some of the main features that distinguish the political model from other organisational models (Berger & Milem, 2000; Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Morgan, 2006). In the case of this study, the possible influence or control of political power could be seen in the ministry's enforcement of teaching Islamic and Arabic courses to all students studying in Saudi public or private universities. Such enforcement may create tensions between the policy of teaching these courses and the views of students forced to take them. This issue was examined in greater depth

earlier in this chapter in the discussion of non-Muslim students and non-native speaking Arabic students. The subject of Saudi educational politics and its implications for students (or the political aspects of Saudi higher education) might be an interesting subject to explore in future research.

However, this particular aspect was not studied in this research. Implications of policies implemented by the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education might cause occasional tensions within the university system. For example, non-Muslim students who refused to register for the mandatory Islamic course illustrates a tension that arose between the university and some of its students. This situation happened because of the policy that required all students studying in Saudi universities to take Islamic and Arabic courses regardless of a student's native language or religion. This is an obvious example of the exercise of power resulting in disagreements, which is characteristic of a political organisational structure. However, it is important to point out that the main stated purpose of the Islamic course was to provide students with general information about the Islamic faith and to educate them about general Islamic practices without any intention of converting them to the Islamic faith. Another important example of political power that might have negatively affected people who worked within the university is the gender-segregated campuses. Although it was the government's policy and the Saudi culture that strongly supported the enforcement of gender segregation in higher educational institutions and in many other governmental organisations, some of the interviewees claimed that such a policy created difficulties and conflicts in their work. Faculty members reported that their inability to directly report to the male directors or the university rector, not being completely independent from the male administration and the frequent need to report to the administration on

the male campus limited their involvement in decision making and created the need for a dean to coordinate efforts between the women's and men's campuses. It is also important to note that students reported no issues with the gender-segregated environment. Perhaps this issue was taken for granted by the interviewed students since many of them had spent their entire lives in such an environment. This research suggests that the academic and work experiences of students and staff at the selected university were definitely influenced by Islamic and cultural roles and practices.

Teamwork, harmony, shared meanings, concerns and values that were suggested as main features of a symbolic organisational structure (Morgan, 2006) were very evident within the university and throughout most of the interviews. Administrators and faculty members claimed that the university's management values teamwork when it comes to work processes and interactions with students. Student voice and involvement was emphasised through efforts such as tutoring programmes, activities and student clubs. These characteristics of PSU embody value placed on teamwork by the university. Also, charity events and other extracurricular activities sponsored by the university emphasise shared meaning and stress harmony among university members. The fact that the large majority of students and staff were Muslim and Arab, as well as features associated with the small campus, all appeared to play important roles in shaping the campus environment and in creating a culture where harmony, shared meaning and values were strongly emphasised.

Based upon the previous discussion and results of data analysis, the university's organisational structure reflects features of multiple organisational structural models. Features of the bureaucratic, collegial, political and symbolic organisational models were explored as part of this research. Finding aspects of

multiple organisational structures within PSU corresponds with Berger and Milem's (2000) suggestion that universities' organisational structures can reflect more than one model.

After classifying PSU's organisational structure, the goal of this research was to examine how the university's organisational structure influences students' experiences. The following section discusses how each conception of organisational structure relevant to PSU influenced students' perceptions regarding their college years.

Overall, students seemed to be satisfied with the bureaucratic features found in university practices. Students were very positive when it came to the smoothness of course registration, the firm implementation of rules and regulations and the university's policies. Students expressed that they knew their rights and limits and appreciated the university's efforts to make their daily routines organised and neat. Students negatively commented about the hierarchy of the university's system and time-consuming processes when it comes to issues such as transferring credits from other universities or obtaining approval for some activities and events. At the same time, however, they also acknowledged that this was due to the university's policies and regulations and did not have a significant impact on their overall experiences.

Students were very positive regarding aspects of the university that were associated with the collegial model. Students provided positive feedback about the open door policy that the university implements and appeared to appreciate the fact that their voices were heard and that they could reach any person regardless of their position. Students liked the freedom of discussing their ideas, complaints and suggestions. This was discussed earlier where students emphasised their ability to

discuss any issues that they found negatively influenced their experiences (e.g., teaching methods, coursework based on lecturing and memorising, and course material that neglected the Saudi system).

Students also appreciated the university's efforts and support in relation to social activities and events within the university as well as the university's encouragement for students to be involved in academic events and conferences. The sense of community was greatly valued among students. Most of the students pointed out that PSU is like their second home and that they feel a sense of belonging on campus.

Students also appreciated flexibility in the university's practices especially when it came to difficulties that they faced, dressing codes and accommodations to their schedules. Aspects of the collegial model demonstrated by PSU contributed to a high level of comfort by students on the university's campus.

Students commented that PSU has a strong academic reputation among Saudi universities which is the feature that most attracted them to apply to attend the university. Students reported that the main reason driving their decisions to study at PSU was the belief that they would be well-prepared for their future careers and that they would develop a strong foundation of knowledge. Students pointed out that most PSU graduates secured well-paying jobs due to PSU's strong academic reputation. Students attraction to the university's academic reputation correlates with Kamens' (1971) suggestion which illustrates a positive correlation between an institution's power and prestige with students' commitment and persistence. This corresponds with features of the political organisational model that were discussed earlier where competition is emphasised.

Symbolic organisational features founded in this research appeared to be reflected in students' commitment to teamwork such as through tutoring and helping others academically and socially. Additionally, the involvement of students in extra non-academic activities such as charity events, which are organised and executed by students, highlights the shared meanings and values that the university has within its culture and reflects positively on the university's level of commitment toward the community and society. This research could not identify any action or participants' input that might relate to features of the systematic organisational model. The influence of the Saudi culture, which emphasises Islamic values and Saudi traditions, was strongly expressed by students who believed that religion was part of their identity

Overall, students claimed to be satisfied with their college experience at PSU. They expressed an acceptable level of satisfaction regarding services that the university offers them. Students appreciated the university's plans for improvement. They felt this way because they had already witnessed changes and improvement within the system. For example, one student stated, "They opened new building where all the classes have smart boards and high tech equipment. They are improving" (ST8). Students did not perceive the need to transfer to a different university, but desired to stay at PSU. Students' perceptions regarding their academic and social experiences within the college as well as the functions of the university's facilities were used as measurement tools that reflected students' levels of satisfaction with their college experiences. This approach was adapted from Berger and Milem's (2000) model which was used as a primary guide for this research. Although students raised many concerns which were discussed earlier in this chapter, students'

perceptions largely suggested a positive correlation among students' experiences and the bureaucratic and collegial features of the university's organisational structure.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the collected data for this study as well as its analysis. The end of this chapter discussed results of this study that identified the organisational structure of the observed university and connected it to participants' perceptions regarding their experiences within the university. The research discussion and results raised several issues and pinpointed some tensions that seemed to be very important and crucial to the ways in which the university influences students and staff members' experiences.

This chapter also highlighted strong bureaucratic features of the university's system which are embodied in the clarity of rules and orders as well as in inflexibility related to decision making. Additionally, a strong homogenous Islamic culture, reinforcing apparent harmony and shared values, is evidence of collegiality reflected by the university's system. However, the enforcement of certain policies indicates the existence of practices reflecting political power within the university. These issues show that this university's organisational structure represents mixed organisational models, resulting in complicated tensions and a need for careful examination.

Examples of the essential issues that were raised during the data analysis and created tensions include the following:

1. The issue of the multicultural environment and how it was influenced or affected by Islamic and Saudi values that are strongly embodied within the university system.

2. The influence of an individual dean or leader on the institution's environment as well as on staff members' and students' experiences.
3. Differences among staff members' and students' perspectives especially when discussing the university's level of flexibility, curriculum and teaching methods and how this relates to students' academic experiences.
4. The tension that exists due to the university's bureaucratic organisational structure. Mixed perceptions regarding bureaucracy within the university were described by participants.
5. The influence of a political organisational structure, such as evidenced by the influence of power by the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education requiring all students in Saudi universities to study Islamic and Arabic courses.

The next chapter further summarises this research study. This is followed by a discussion of research findings, conclusions and recommendations for further research at PSU and similar institutions.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The hypothesis of this research was that there is a relationship between the organisational structure of universities and students' perceptions of their learning experiences and outcomes during their college years. This study specifically asked the following:

How and in what ways does college organisational behaviour and culture influence students' learning experiences through their college years in a women's Saudi Arabian private university?

To examine this hypothesis, chapters 2 and 3 offered extensive information on higher education, in general and in Saudi Arabia, as well as the factors, such as those related to politics and religion, which influence the structure of the Saudi higher educational system. The literature review in chapter 4 provided a detailed description of organisational models that were used as a foundation to classify the research site in this study. Chapters 5 and 6 detailed the qualitative methodology that was adopted in this research and was followed by a detailed discussion of the analysed data in chapter 7. All of the foregoing chapters formed a basis for the following section which discusses the significance of the research findings for this study as well as the implications of its results.

Research Findings and Discussion

A qualitative analysis of the data was conducted to determine the university's organisational structure and to assess interview transcripts. The first part of this research analysis focused on an in-depth examination of the organisational structure and culture of the selected university and categorisation of the university's organisational structure. Categorisation was based on official documents from the university, information from the university's website and interviews with study participants, which were developed using current literature as a framework for this research. Codes that were used in this part of the analysis were developed based on publications discussed in chapter 4 (Berger & Milem, 2000; Bergquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Morgan, 2006).

The second portion of the analysis dealt with students' perceptions regarding their learning environments, which play important roles in shaping their experiences and outcomes. This part of the analysis drew upon Berger and Milem's (2000) model, which examined the relationship between universities' organisational structures and students' learning experiences. Codes that were used to categorise the data and to address the research questions were based on available literature, the research questions and the context of the interviews.

Overall, results of this study show that PSU has a mainly bureaucratic and collegial administrative style with some features having political and symbolic significance alongside organisational structures. Finding aspects of multiple organisational structures within PSU corresponds with the suggestions of Berger and Milem (2000) and (McNay, 1995) that universities' organisational structures can reflect more than one organisational structural model. In addition, results showed that

the university had excellent facilities and maintenance. No shortage of activities or supplies was observed. Overall, the university appeared to have a convenient campus, with research indicating that this helps to attract and retain students (Astin, 1993b; Berger & Milem, 2000; Tinto, 1994; Weidman, 1989).

The organisational structural models of the selected university appeared to have some connection to students' perceptions and influenced their college experiences. This research supports the discussion illustrated in chapter 4 that pointed out that the behaviours of an organisation or institution impact people within the organisation itself, whether they are working or studying. For example, researchers such as Berger and Milem (2000) have suggested that students who study in collegial universities where fairness, communication and participation are key components of the university's structure are more likely to persist in their studies. Students in these studies claimed to enjoy the collegial behaviours that the universities practiced and emphasised, such as open door policies, the valuing of student voice and opinions, a strong sense of community and other aspects of collegial organisations that were discussed in chapter 7. The collegial features of the studied university seemed to be the most attractive features causing students to persist with their studies at PSU.

In contrast, Strange (1991, 1994) suggested that highly bureaucratic universities have a positive influence on students' behaviour on campus. Strange also noted that some students may be more comfortable with a less complex, more formalised, more centralised and a less innovative campus.

This study agreed with some of the issues that are related to the influence of collegial and bureaucratic behaviour on students' experiences. Students in this study suggested that they liked the clarity of regulations and the organisation of the

university's system (e.g., where events were well-planned and organised). This indicates a positive correlation with some of the key components of the bureaucratic model and corresponds with McNay's (1995) suggestion that bureaucracies' positive influence or strengths are illustrated in examples where people are provided with equal opportunities where they earn what they deserve based on standardised procedures and where there is security and stability within the organisational environment (Dopson & McNay, 2000). Similarly, positive feedback from students regarding some of the bureaucratic features of PSU, such as clarity and organised classes and good structuring methods, correlates with Braxton, Bray and Berger's (2000) study which concluded that what happens in the classroom is important and has a strong influence on students' persistence. Braxton et al. suggested that when students have a better understanding of the subject matter, their studying time is reduced.

In contrast, students in this study negatively viewed some of the bureaucratic features, such as limitations in the decision-making process and firmness in regulations. Also, students and staff negatively commented about the highly bureaucratic and centralised administrative style that characterised a particular leader at PSU. This raised important issues about the stability and consistency of the university's administrative structure and whether it depends on a leader's personal management skills or conversely on clearly communicated criteria that all leaders are committed to follow. At the same time, students acknowledged some level of flexibility that the university claimed to implement, but their recognition of this was limited and had little influence on their experiences. This was unlike the flexibility reported by staff members who viewed this feature more positively. For example,

faculty members appreciated the freedom to choose their teaching methods and curriculum and felt that it was a positive feature of the university's system which may not be consistent in other universities. This correlates with Birnbaum's (1988) suggestion that an important feature of the collegial culture includes respect of faculty members' freedom and independence. This correlates with Berger and Milem's (2000) suggestion that highly bureaucratic, collegial organisations with low levels of political organisational features which emphasise power and control influence the development of humanistic values, such as an individual's personal development, attitudes, beliefs, involvement in religious life, collaborative learning and self-concept.

Limitations in decision making in the university's environment contrast with fundamental Islamic leadership principles discussed by Al-Buraey (1985) which emphasise that in Islamic society, leadership does not mean absolute authority over people; instead, it means sharing decisions and consulting with others as advisors (*Shura* principle). Although the leader finalises decisions, there is a process before decisions are reached. To ensure justice and equality, representatives from different levels of society and advisors contribute to the decision-making process at different levels and circumstances. The university in this study attempted to listen to the feedback of its members. However, final decisions were centralised.

Features of a political organisational structure detected in this research, and its positive influence on students, is limited to the strong academic reputation of the university, international accreditation and consistent ranking among other universities. These features seemed to attract new students and to minimise student withdrawal. On the other hand, some students were negatively influenced by the implementation of political power on their academic experiences, such as in the cases of non-Muslim

students and non-Arabic native speaking students who were required to participate in Islamic and Arabic courses that might not have been suitable for all students. The negative influence of political power found to be linked to the university's claims of being a multicultural institution appear to create a tension that emphasises limitations in the university's flexibility and conflicts with aspects of a multicultural environment identified earlier in this thesis (see chapter 4). While there were few non-Muslim and non-Arabic native speaking students attending the university at the time of this study, there is a potential increase of students representing these categories in the future. This, thus, warrants further attention and effective solutions that accommodate their needs and value their identities.

Symbolic features that emphasised shared values, rituals and harmony all seemed to have a clear, positive correlation with students' and staff members' experiences. Participants strongly appreciated the harmonious environment and manifestation of the Saudi culture and Islamic values on the university's campus. Staff and students from other countries also claimed to enjoy the manifestation of the Saudi and Islamic cultures on the campus, especially during events and celebrations such as the celebration of Saudi National Day and other religious holidays.

An emphasis of Islamic and Saudi cultural values was clearly noticeable in this research along with a strong adaptation to a western curriculum and dependence on the English language. This corresponds with Coffman's (2003) suggestion claiming that the patterning of Saudi Arabia's higher education system on western models does not cause significant controversy as long as Islamic values and beliefs are maintained within the organisational structures of the universities.

In summary, this research identified the organisational structural models that best fit the selected university's organisational structure and explained the relationship between features of these organisational structural models and students' experiences. The final section provides conclusions and a reflection on the challenges of this research. It also offers recommendations for future research.

It was a challenge to examine a Saudi private female campus with very limited publications discussing organisational culture and behaviours of the Saudi higher educational system. Additionally, it was challenging to examine a homogenous campus using western methodological and analytical approaches that were devised for more multicultural institutions. Therefore, the development of this research methodology was in some way distinctive.

The development of the methodology for this research considered the following factors:

1. The limitation of publications that specifically discussed Saudi higher education and its organisational structures and behaviours.
2. The dependence on western literature when developing research questions, interview questions and the coding process.
3. The researcher's objective modifications to the analytical approaches that respected the uniqueness and homogeneity of the Saudi university.

Self-Reflection

This research journey has been exciting and exhausting. The author of this research has been learning and exploring interesting issues since the beginning of this research. In addition to providing answers regarding how organisational structures

affect students' learning experiences in a Saudi private university, this research also benefited the researcher. First, it developed and strengthened my qualitative research skills and allowed me to connect theory and existing research about organisational cultures, universities' organisational behaviours and students' learning experiences and satisfaction. This task was a personal learning process that enriched my knowledge and provided me with the opportunity to draw closer to administrators and faculty members and to learn from their management skills and experience. More importantly, this research placed me in a position where I could connect personally with students, listen to their needs and understand their requests. It also increased my understanding of the duties of academic staff and administrators and students' expectations. This learning process was an enriching experience, which will influence my professional life and future career.

Conducting this research in a Saudi university by a Saudi researcher, utilising western methodological and analytical approaches and being supervised by a western university raised an interesting point that illustrates the tension between the homogenous culture that was examined and the development of my personal analytical approach. This research examined and analysed one culture by using another culture's tools. This means that the Saudi culture which was strongly embodied in the researched university with its values, rituals, beliefs and Islamic practices was extensively examined and analysed by a person from the same culture but with a different analytical perspective. This reflects the development of the researcher's personal thinking and cognitive skills that might be influenced by the researcher's western educational experiences that started 18 years ago since the beginning of the researcher's graduate studies in the United States and United

Kingdom. This experience not only impacted the researcher academically, but more importantly helped me to become more objective, more accepting of others' opinions and to develop critical thinking skills that were not emphasised during the researcher's undergraduate studies.

More importantly, the author of this research worked through several challenges that are summarised in the following paragraphs. One of the main challenges facing the researcher was a lack of references throughout the various stages of research. Limited publications addressing Saudi higher education on a national level and, consequently, significant dependence on western publications emphasised the urgent need for future research and publications specifically focused on higher education in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, limited official publications from the university at an institutional level negatively affected this research by creating difficulties in understanding the nature of the university's organisational structure. Thus, substantial dependence was placed on observations and interviews conducted by the researcher.

One of the largest challenges I faced as a Saudi researcher conducting research in a Saudi university in pursuit of a Ph.D. from an institution in the United Kingdom was cultural differences between Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom. For example, discussions regarding Islamic and cultural values that embody Islamic practice, gender segregation and other aspects of the culture might seem contentious and interesting for non-Saudis or non-Muslims. However, these practices are commonplace to Saudis. It was not surprising for me, as the researcher, to see a surprised look on the faces of research participants when asking questions that focused on Islamic and cultural values. To comfort participants, I explained the

importance of these aspects for western readers who want to learn more about Saudi Arabia's religious and cultural values and the implications for Saudi life. It was extremely difficult to seek participants' perspectives regarding their religion (i.e., Islam) and cultural values because they tended to take these issues for granted and did not view them as a topic for conversation. Coming from the same culture and background, I understood the attitude of most of the participants; I personally faced difficulties problematising, criticising, explaining and reasoning through the religious and cultural aspects of this thesis because they are part of my identity and personality. During the stage that dealt with critical aspects, such as Islamic and Saudi cultural values, I was trained to think outside the box and to isolate myself from the situation to become more realistic and neutral. Overcoming this challenge has personally been beneficial to me.

As previously discussed in this section, I remain a Saudi woman who seeks to develop and improve herself through her studies and exposure to other cultures. Looking back from where I started and comparing it to where I am now reflects a combination of interesting issues. I am still part of the Saudi culture and respect its values and beliefs. However, at the same time, I have become more liberal with my thoughts which can be seen in my acceptance of differences among cultures and my ability to objectively and rationally critique various issues. Ultimately, the processes undergone during this research have helped me to develop my personal and academic skills.

Another fundamental challenge for me in this research was the difference between writing styles in Arabic and English. Although I studied in the United States for eight years, was trained to use the western writing style and have been studying at

an institution in the United Kingdom for more than five years, I was strongly influenced by my native Arabic tongue, which affected my writing style. There are some differences between writing in Arabic and English. In my opinion, and with due respect to both languages, the Arabic writing style tends to use more elegant and fancy words and to criticise gently, while the western English writing style tends to be more focused, straight to the point and more critical. This was a challenge for the researcher during the writing of this thesis and required many drafts to conform to the required writing style for the university in the United Kingdom that is supervising this research.

This research also highlights some interesting issues that were discovered during data collection, such as Saudi female students' career ambitions and expectations as well as issues of religious radicalism. This research focused on female students' and staff members' perceptions and expectations. Interviews suggested that most of the interviewees planned to work in Saudi Arabia and to seek to prepare themselves for the Saudi job market. No participant raised the issue of working in a country outside of Saudi Arabia. Some students suggested that they might conduct their graduate studies in the United States or the United Kingdom and return with their degrees to Saudi Arabia to work and establish their careers. Being from the same background and taking into account the cultural values and limitations placed on Saudi women, it is understandable that the issue of having or establishing a career outside of Saudi Arabia is not expected from Saudi woman. The Saudi culture has unique features and values, which reflect conservative practices that may limit or restrict Saudi females in specific situations.

A relevant issue that arose during the course of this research was the issue of Islamic radicalism and how it is in opposition to the Islamic value of peace. The recent global turmoil caused by religious extremists was not discussed during data collection and never during the discussion of Islamic culture and values. One reason for this is that the research began five years ago and the data were collected 18 months ago when the world was calmer and more peaceful than it is at present. Another reason for the absence of this topic is that all of the research participants appeared to be moderate in their religious beliefs and values. University leaders also stressed that they aimed to spread moderate Islamic values, which emphasise general ethics that are agreeable and encouraged by most world religions. In spite of these challenges, I believe that this research achieved its purpose and answered the research questions.

Recommendations for the Research Site

Findings from this research demonstrate a relationship between the university's organisational behaviours and students' satisfaction levels with their learning and college experiences. This relationship was examined and discussed extensively in chapters 7 and 8, leading to clear conclusions that emphasise the importance of how a university's structure and behaviours influence students' college experiences.

This research also illustrates several areas in the university's system and behaviours that could be improved to increase students' satisfaction levels and outcomes. Therefore, in order for the studied university to improve the quality of the services that it provides for students and to achieve its mission, several

recommendations should be considered. The following section highlights several recommendations that could help to strengthen some of the weaker aspects that appeared in this research.

A main issue that needs serious consideration relates to students' academic experiences. The quality of teaching was highly criticised and linked to a decline in student satisfaction. Students in this research complained about ordinary teaching and testing methods which were mostly based on lecturing and memorising. Students were more interested in creative teaching methods that would increase their involvement and motivation as well as provide a challenging learning environment. Therefore, efforts to improve teaching and testing methods are worthy of consideration in order to maximise students' academic benefits.

Students also showed a strong desire to connect theoretical knowledge to the Saudi market. The curriculum needs to be more connected to Saudi regulations and policies. Additionally, instructors need an increased awareness and ability to explain subjects in light of the Saudi context, especially as this relates to the law and business departments. This type of instruction would better prepare students to enter the job market upon graduation.

Another important issue that needs immediate attention is the mandatory Arabic and Islamic classes for non-Arabic and non-Muslim students. The university should be more flexible in finding real solutions for minority students who do not speak or understand Arabic and for non-Muslim students. For minority students (non-Arabic native speakers and non-Muslims), substituting mandatory credits with courses such as basic Arabic and Islamic ethics would positively benefit students by allowing

them to learn Arabic as a second language and educating them in general about the Islam religion.

Also, more flexibility is needed for students transferring credits. As the nature of education becomes increasingly global with leading universities around the world supporting e-learning education and overseas programmes, admission and registration policies for the research site should accommodate these changes and reflect greater flexibility related to long distance learning and e-learning transfer credits.

The lack of the information about the university (e.g., policies, regulations, history of the university's creation, etc.) was one of the major limitations of this study. The university's website provided scant information regarding its organisation and structure and did not reflect the institution's culture or administrative style. Consequently, more transparency is needed on the university's website that could be provided through increased information about the institution's identity, culture, beliefs, social commitments, values, policies and regulations. Such information would expand representation of the university as well as positively influence prospective students' and faculty members' perspectives of the institution.

Finally, as a Saudi woman who strongly believes in the abilities, strength, intelligence, commitments and ambition of Saudi women, it is recommended that the women's campus needs more independence from the men's campus. This should include less control from the men's higher administration, more authority for the women's campus and women's real involvement in decision making processes. Empowering Saudi woman would positively increase their self-confidence and productivity and would reflect positively on Saudi society in general.

Conclusions

This research conducted an in-depth examination of one case study for a private women's university in Saudi Arabia, which was a previously unstudied aspect of the Saudi Arabian higher education system. This research aimed to answer the following research question:

How and in what ways does college organisational behaviour and culture influence students' learning experiences through their college years in a women's Saudi Arabian private university?

This case study indeed answered the research question, and the university's organisational structure was classified and linked to relevant literature. This research also connected the classification of the selected university's organisational structure to students' college experiences through the examination of students' perceptions of their academic, social and functional experiences during their college experiences.

While the information gathered in this study may not provide conclusions applicable to other higher education institutions, it serves as a starting point for studies with larger samples and other research approaches and methods. This highlights some strengths and weaknesses of the methodology that was used in this research. A qualitative approach provided this research with detailed and in-depth data, which reflected positively on understanding the nature of the relationship between the university's administration and students. At the same time, it limited the number of research participants, which may have affected the reliability of the gathered information and provided a narrower perspective. Therefore, it would be beneficial to use other research methods and approaches to explore this subject because of the possibility of revealing additional information about the relationship

between the university's organisational structure and students, thus enhancing research reliability. Larger samples, comparative studies and quantitative approaches are all suggested ways that could explore this subject from different perspectives and would be constructive in revealing additional information and exploring new issues.

The sampling process in this research raised important issues for future research such as, verifying the sample to cover more participant categories including minority students who are non-Muslim, non-Arabic speakers and non-Saudi. Also, samples for future research should contain a larger number and wider range of participants in order to gain a varied and inclusive image of the institution and focus of the research as well as to strengthen the reliability of the research. Utilising a larger sample with different research methodology, such as a quantitative approach, may enable generalisation of the findings.

Another recommendation for future research is to conduct a comparative study between public and private institutions. Examination of the organisational structures of public and private universities would illustrate differences between their structures and would help to understand the effects on students. Conducting a comparative study between public and private institutions would help to understand differences, if any, between the nature of public and private universities' organisational structures.

Another important reason for future research that investigates the influence of higher educational institutions' organisational behaviours on students is the scarcity of new publications that examine this topic, both in general and specifically in Saudi Arabia. This is an important subject that requires further examination. Studying this subject would not only benefit institutions by identifying their strengths and weaknesses, but would also help to optimise universities' efforts to improve the

quality of education offered to students. Additionally, more research in this area would benefit students by identifying their needs and perceptions about their academic, social, functional and overall college experiences.

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APPENDIX A

Codes for Administrator Transcripts

1. Involvement in decision making
2. Leadership (formal/informal)
3. Flexibility (with implementation of policies and regulations, when dealing with conflicts and difficulties)
4. Support
5. Satisfaction
6. Sense of community on campus
7. Environment (friendly/positive)
8. Social interaction on campus (administrators, faculty members, students)
9. Involvement in campus activities
10. Clarity of rules and regulations
11. Mechanisms of work
12. Building facilities and supplies
13. Gender equity
14. Opportunities for career development (training sessions, conference attendance)

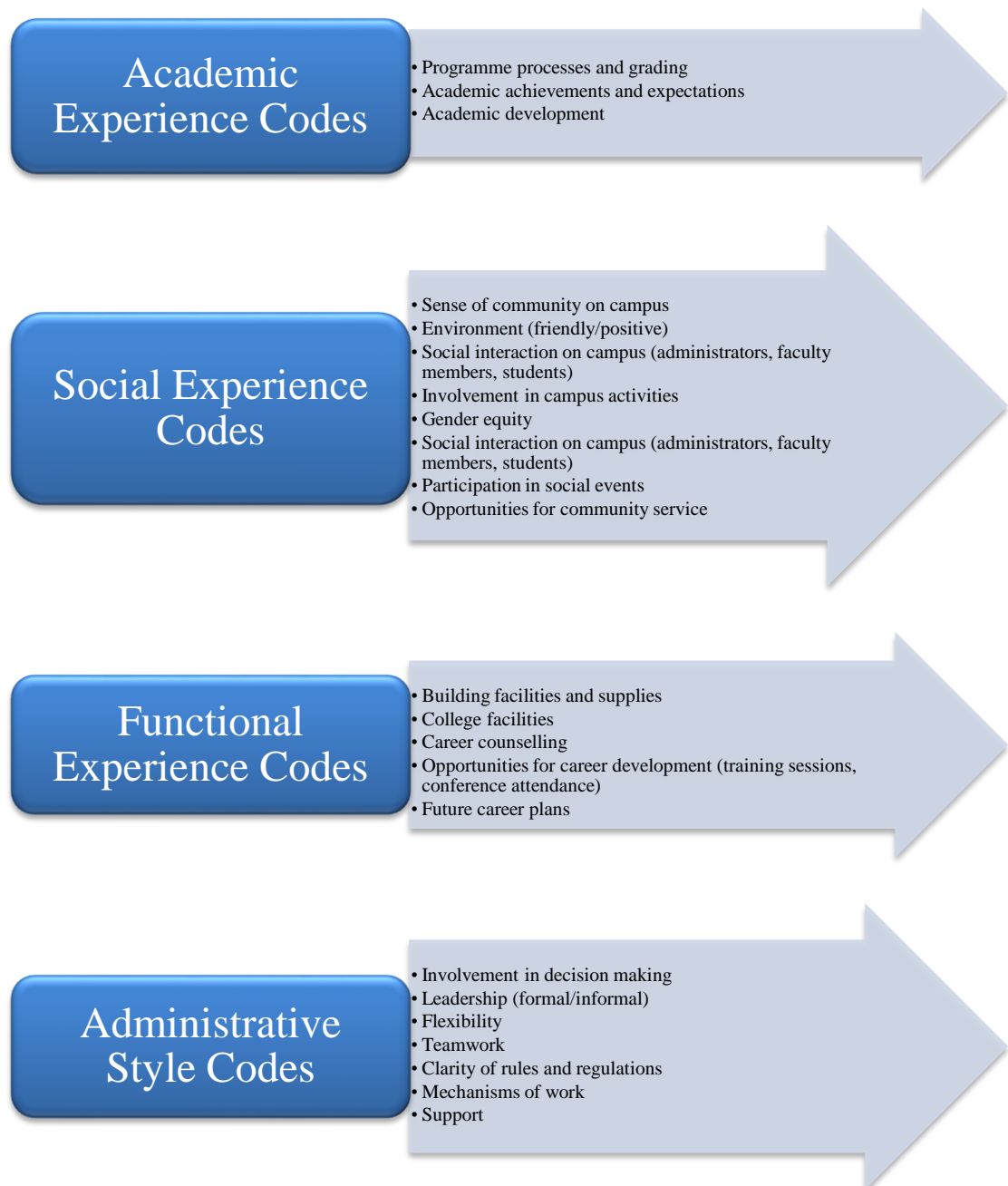


Figure A. Categories and codes used for data analysis of administrators' interviews.

APPENDIX B

Codes for Faculty Member Transcripts

1. Work condition
2. Flexibility
3. Involvement in decision making
4. Support
5. Clarity of rules and regulations
6. Campus environment (friendly/positive)
7. Opportunity to choose teaching materials and teaching methods
8. Grading and programmes (programme plan, grading process, coursework loads, course organisation, teaching quality, curriculum quality, active involvement with course materials)
9. Sense of community on campus
10. Social interaction on campus (administrators, faculty members, students)
11. Participation in social events
12. Building facilities and supplies
13. Gender equity
14. Opportunities for career development (training sessions, conference attendance)
15. Future career plans

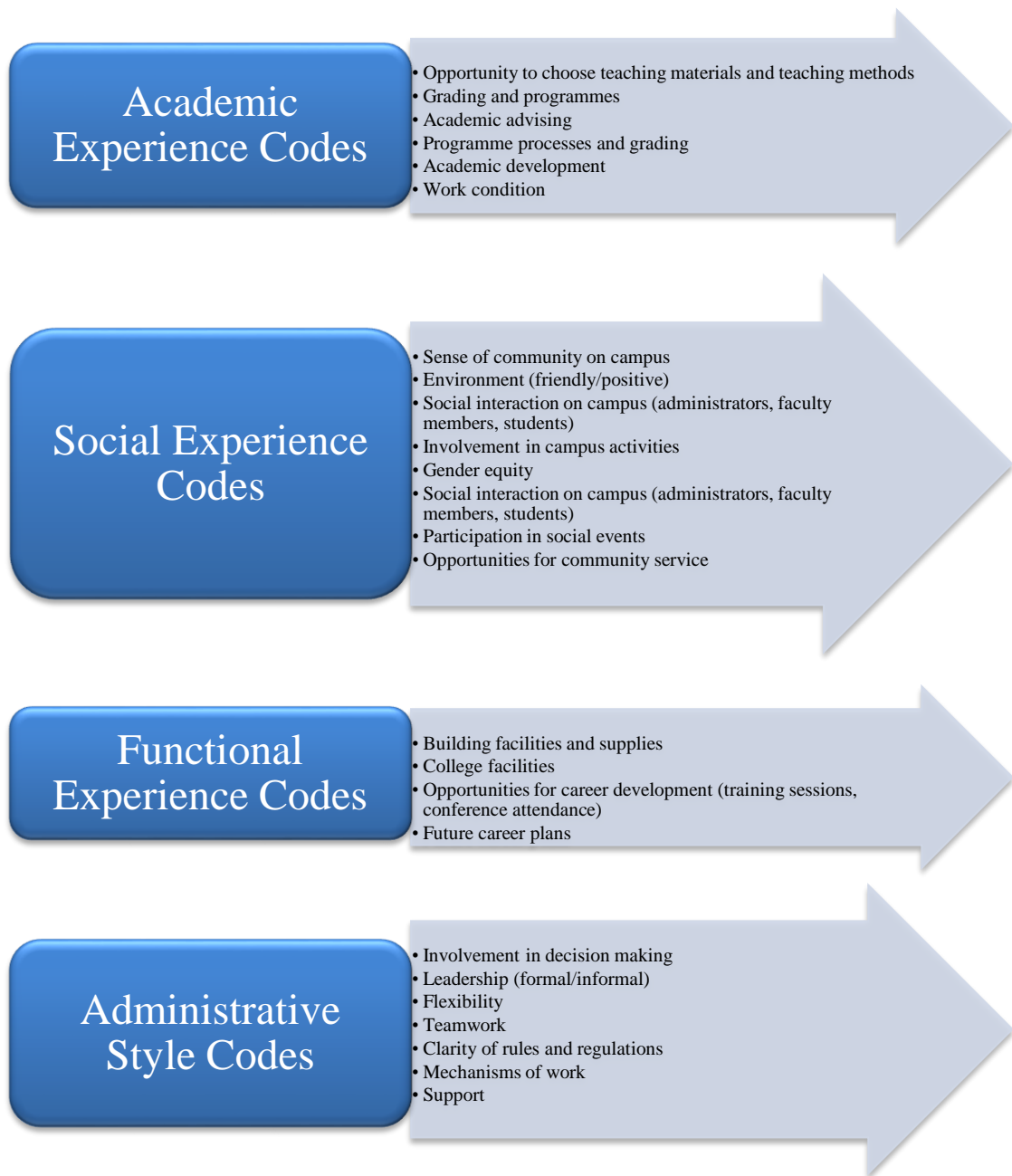


Figure B. Categories and codes used for data analysis of faculty members' interviews.

APPENDIX C

Codes for Student Transcripts

1. Clarity of rules and regulations
2. Flexibility
3. Ability to find faculty members/administrators
4. Academic advising
5. Tutoring and academic support
6. Course quality
7. Overall quality of instructors
8. Collaborative learning (work in groups, study with others, discuss courses with other students)
9. Programme processes and grading
10. Academic achievements and expectations
11. Academic development
12. On-campus activities and events
13. Opportunities for community service
14. Sense of community on campus
15. Social interaction on campus (administrators, faculty members, students)
16. College facilities
17. Career counselling
18. Life preparation for careers
19. Overall college experience

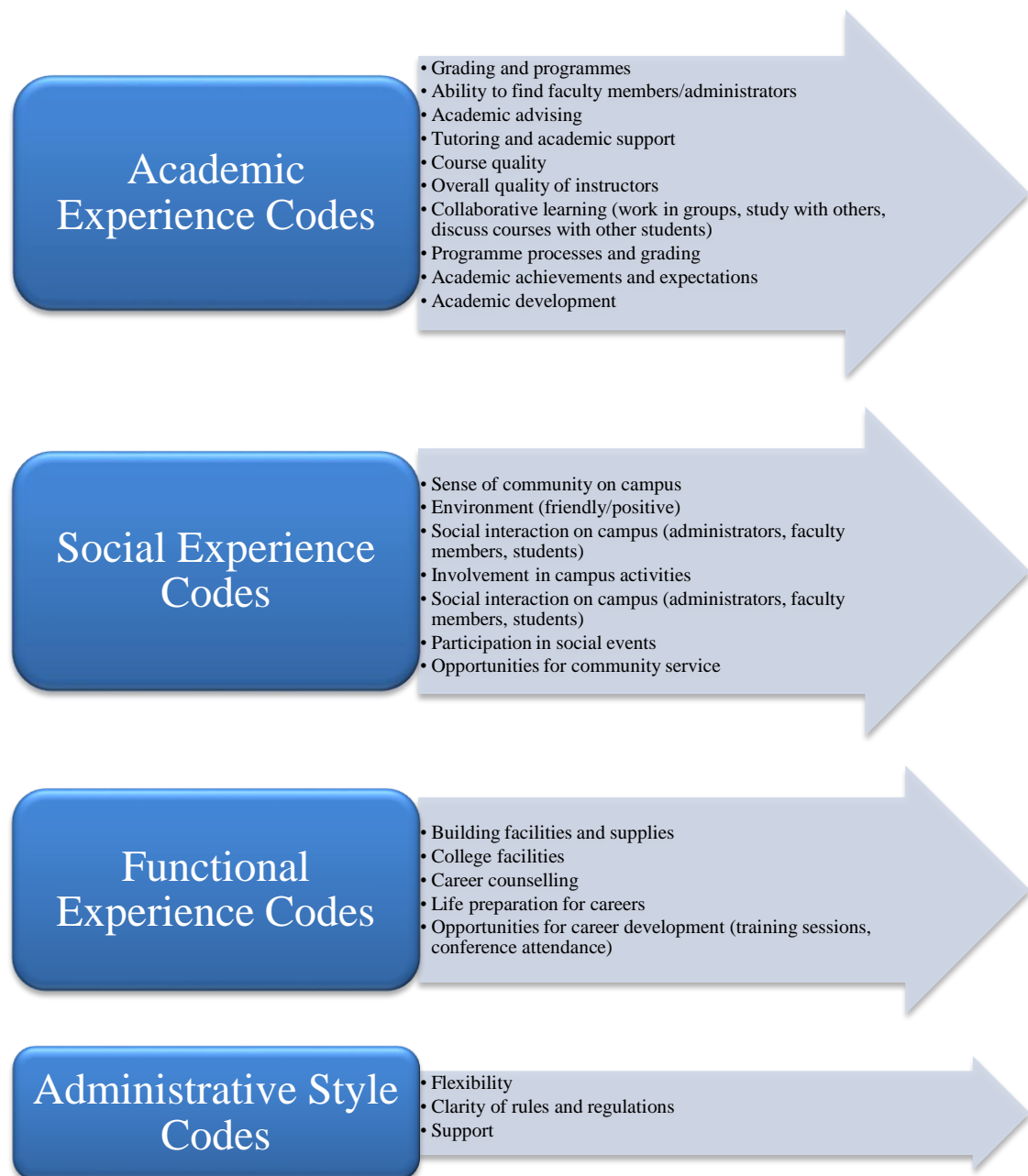


Figure C. Categories and codes used for data analysis of student focus group.